

# Florida

Florida Game and Inland Fisheries  
Marine Laboratory  
St. Petersburg, Florida

FLYING WILDLIFE OFFICER  
FLORIDA'S STRIPED BASS

Fishing • Hunting  
• Conservation •

# WILDLIFE

MAY, 1960

*The Florida Magazine for all Sportsmen*

25 CENTS







# FOR THAT BIG ONE THAT DIDN'T GET AWAY

## FLORIDA WILDLIFE'S FISHING CITATION

is available without charge, to any and all subscribers to Florida Wildlife Magazine, and their immediate families, who catch any of the fresh-water game fish of the prescribed species and size requirements. Citation, showing recorded date of the catch, will be mailed to the applicant upon receipt of the following application form that has been properly filled out and signed.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS SPECIES

#### LARGEMOUTH BASS

\_\_\_\_\_ 8 pounds or larger

#### CHAIN PICKEREL

\_\_\_\_\_ 4 pounds or larger

#### BLUEGILL (BREAM)

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 1/2 pounds or larger

#### SHELLCRACKER

\_\_\_\_\_ 2 pounds or larger

#### BLACK CRAPPIE

\_\_\_\_\_ 2 pounds or larger

#### RED BREAST

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 pound or larger

### CUT OUT AND SAVE THIS APPLICATION BLANK

#### APPLICATION FOR FLORIDA WILDLIFE FISHING CITATION

The Editor, FLORIDA WILDLIFE \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Fla.

Please send me the Florida Wildlife Fishing Citation with the inscribed data listed below:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Species of Fish \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Length \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Tackle, Bait Used \_\_\_\_\_

Where Caught \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Catch Witnessed by \_\_\_\_\_

Registered, Weighed by \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Applicant)

All fish must be taken from the fresh waters of the state of Florida, as defined by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Fish must be caught on conventional fly, spinning, or bait-casting tackle, with artificial or live bait, in the presence of at least one witness.

The catch must be weighed and recorded at a fishing camp or tackle store within the state by the owner, manager, or an authorized agent of the respective establishment.



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Dedicated to the  
Conservation, Restoration, and Protection of Our Game and Fish

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ROSE  TALLAHASSEE

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# STRIKES

## and Backlashes



### CARELESSNESS

Editor:

Do you know what my eight-year old son said when he saw the picture on page-18, your March issue? "Daddy, look where these hunters have laid their guns. On the tables."

I thought you was telling the boys that good hunters and sportsmen always put their guns up SAFELY. What could I tell my son? The only excuse was carelessness, but pictures like these will sometimes remain in a boy's mind.

Mario Taylor  
St. Augustine, Fla.

• The boy's gun safety training has paid off, Mr. Taylor. He certainly was quick to spot right from wrong—quicker than we here on the staff.

### CANAL BASS

Dear Editor:

The enclosed photograph shows two bass I caught late in January, 15 miles west of Ft. Pierce, while fly fishing along the drainage canal. The larger weighed 8½-pounds, the smaller 7½-pounds.

Orvis Coursey  
Ft. Pierce, Fla.



### LAKE BASS

Gentlemen:

Enclosed you will find two photos of anglers holding nice size bass caught while

fishing on Lake Crescent. Mrs. Louise Carr is from Durham, N.C., and landed this largemouth bass early in March while vacationing at the Bass Capital Resort. Mr. A. E. McKee (right) is holding a 14-pound, 6-ounce bass, for which a fishing citation application is enclosed. Mr. McKee is a marine engineer on the Great Lakes, and spends his summers on a steamer there, and winters fishing down here.

Tex L'Argent  
Crescent City, Fla.



### APPRECIATION

Gentlemen:

I am a new subscriber to your magazine (about four months) and not much for writing letters to magazine editors, but I just finished reading the April issue, and am writing this card in appreciation. Never have I been able to derive so much pleasure, and obtain so much information, as I have since becoming a subscriber. That April issue was the best yet, for me, as I am not a hunter. You have a life-time subscriber.

G. B. Morrison  
Atlanta, Ga.



### ANOTHER BIG ONE

Dear Sir:

The enclosed picture is of Charles D. Jacobs, of St. Petersburg, with a largemouth bass that weighed in at 12-pounds, 12-ounces. As you can see, we catch big ones in these parts too.

Jerome Brocksway  
St. Petersburg, Fla.





## LIP SERVICE

The Editor:

Enclosed with my subscription renewal check is a snapshot which we have titled "Let's Talk Things Over—A Compromise."

J. C. Williams  
Bonifay, Fla.



## FOREST FACTS

The Editor:

Reference is made to Muzzle Flashes which appeared in the March 1960 issue. We feel a few points need clarification.

It was not pointed out that the deer management program on the Ocala National Forest is jointly carried out by the U.S. Forest Service and the Game Commission. As a joint operation, the two departments keep in constant touch with each other and put into effect those measures which experience and research on the area indicate to be practical and feasible. For instance, it was stated that the Ocala Forest could benefit from controlled burning with the indication that such burning is not now being done. Actually, during the past year, approximately 1,800 acres were burned in the Forest specifically for wildlife, and additional burning beneficial to wildlife was done as part of the forestry management program.

So far as food plantings for deer are concerned, it must be pointed out that such plantings in themselves and without companion management measures do nothing to improve the deer herd. As was pointed out, the size and condition of any herd will depend upon the quality and quantity of food which is available. Further, the soil and climatic conditions of any deer range are the basic controlling factors in determining the types and quantity of food which may be produced. When artificial plantings are put in, the deer herd soon uses up this additional food, so that the general condition of the herd is not in the long run improved. On the other hand, a much sounder pro-

cedure is to improve the quantity of good natural foods available. Contrary to some statements, we know of no instances in which deer take non-nutritional foods when they have available supplies of good quality natural foods. Improvement of deer habitat in the Ocala is being achieved by use of such management practices as control burning, discing of road and power line rights-of-way, pulpwood cutting, and brush cutting of timbered areas with heavy drum choppers.

As a matter of interest, there is a bulletin available, by Mr. Don Strode, of this department, titled—Wildlife Habitat Management In Florida National Forests,—and was presented at the October meeting of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners, Baltimore, Md.

E. B. Chamberlain, Jr.  
Chief, Game Division  
Game & Fresh Water Fish Comm.  
Tallahassee, Fla.

## JACKFISH

Gentlemen:

I have two favors to ask. First off—would like to know just what the Florida jackfish is. Second—do you have free literature pertaining to the game and fish in your state. We are looking for some pamphlets that can be carried along on our trips.

R. L. Beckamare  
Charleston, S. C.

• The Florida fish commonly known as jackfish is the Chain Pickerel, often called Eastern Pickerel, and is the same species found from New England to Texas. For free publications on game and fish, and related subjects, write to: Information-Education Dept., Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Fla. These publications are also available at the five Regional Offices, listed on page 3 of each issue of Florida Wildlife Magazine.

## The Struggle For Survival

NAAS WHITING FIELD, MILTON, Fla., March 10—Just recently an episode in the never ending struggle for survival in the wildlife world took place on the Blackwater River near here.

The event was recorded on film by Ernest J. Gaines, PHC, USN, and Marvin Dockery, AN, USN, who happened to have their cameras along.

The pair was preparing Chief Gaines' boat for a trip up the river when Dockery noticed something thrashing in the water close to the bank around some reeds.

Thinking it might be a snake, he reached for an oar in the boat and took a swing in the direction of the unusual activity.

Not knowing what to expect, the two moved their boat around to inspect the area. The water was approximately 2½ to 3 feet deep along the edge and it was relatively clear.

Seeing a long fish lying on the bottom, the pair thought they had made an unusual catch. And what an unusual catch it turned out to be.

When their catch was in the boat,



they found they had not caught one but two fish. The first, a 22-inch Chain Pickerel, and the second a Shelleracker approximately 1½ pounds in weight.

However, the 'cracker was the victim of the Pickerel's hunger. The Pickerel had managed to swallow the little fellow to the dorsal fins of the latter. ●

**THE COVER**—Mrs. Delores Martin, Panama City, Fla., poses with 44-pound 11-ounce Striped Bass caught along the Intercoastal Waterway, near White City. For the complete story on Florida's Striped Bass, turn to page 12.

Cover Photo By Roy Martin





(This is the fourth in a series of reports on the operation of sportsmen's clubs.)

**I**SOLATIONISM IS NOT noted for solving difficulties.

Some sportsmen's groups organize to combat a purely local problem or promote a purely local program. Once the initial purpose is accomplished they may disappear and a conservation potential is lost.

Nearly 1,000 Florida organizations are actively concerned with conservation. The problems take many forms but they are much the same for every locality. A united front is the chief weapon of conservationists and it is indeed rare that clubs find themselves opposed to each other in any important conservation battle.

County, regional, state and national affiliations are important in getting the job done. Short-sighted members tend to think of federations or associations as groups apart from themselves, not realizing that such associations are simply more clubs like theirs.

If a club opposes the principles of its regional or state group, "Join up and make your own changes," is good advice—but join up.

Membership in an association generally requires nominal dues. Some clubs in seeking large membership have kept their own dues so low they cannot afford affiliation and hesitate to change for fear of losing members. It is easier to provide for affiliation payments when the club is new.

A perennial project of every club should be the nurture of at least one beginning or struggling group. Organization of a neighboring group should attract all-out aid from established clubs.

In helping other clubs you help

By **CHARLES WATERMAN**

yourselves. Leadership of the helping group is inevitably improved. You must learn to teach and many a lackadaisical club officer has changed to a fireball when he helped a new group.

Despite their regular meetings, most federations are really sleeping giants. Making little disturbance until an emergency arises, they can produce enormous political pressure when necessary and can do a quick and efficient job of public education.

On a state level, Florida's conservation clubs are represented by the Florida Wildlife Federation and, nationally, by the National Wildlife Federation. Sub-alliances include both county and regional associations. There are also regional associations of clubs which are not affiliated with the Federation. The Federation is not a government agency although it keeps in close touch with conservation affairs in government.

Some organizations using the Federation as a mouthpiece are not primarily conservation clubs but have conservation problems about which they desire aid or advice. Some individuals join the Federation even when not members of local clubs.

The Federation maintains a central office at 112 West Indiana, Deland, with an unpaid executive secretary and a stenographer. Its president may reside anywhere in the state.

The Izaak Walton League has similar objectives with a national organization and has several chapters in Florida.

An unbroken chain of affiliation from the county through the national level is the strongest front



conservation groups can present.

### **National Meeting**

Meeting in Dallas in March, the National Wildlife Federation re-elected Claude D. Kelley of Atmore, Ala., as president for his 11th consecutive term. F. Ross Brown of Albany, Ore., was elected vice-president for a 3-year term, his second.

Walter Mims of Birmingham was re-elected to the board of directors for a 3-year term, representing Region 4 which includes Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama.

Ernest F. Swift, executive director since 1955, has relinquished his administrative duties for reasons of health and will serve as a conservation advisor, writing for the Conservation News and aiding on in-service training programs. He lives at Rice Lake, Wis.

The Federation now occupies its new \$800,000 building in Washington, D.C., is in sound financial condition and has a backlog of \$41,000 after completing the new structure. The land on which the building was erected was bequeathed to the organization. Adjoining property has since been purchased.

The new building will be a Washington "show spot" according to Federation officials. The national organization is supported in the main by sale of wildlife stamps.

### **Blatnik Bill**

The Blatnik bill which would have increased federal aid to cities making improvement in their sewage disposal facilities was vetoed by President Eisenhower and Congress failed to override his veto.



One of the most important conservation measures of recent years, the bill was aimed at staving off pollution in America's streams and it was hoped it would enable fish and wildlife to stage a "comeback" in many sections.

Vetoed for reasons of economy and because the President felt sewage disposal is primarily a local problem rather than a national one, it now appears the bill is about as dead as it can ever be. Sportsmen's organizations tended to be rather bitter about their defeat but there were some trickles of sunshine through the clouds.

The Florida Wildlife Federation had sent telegrams to Florida congressmen asking that they override the veto. All of the legislators answered the communication and most of them pointed out reasons why loss of the measure was somewhat less than tragic.

It was pointed out that the bill did not provide for the beginning of new projects but simply budgeted more money for previously approved construction. Some of the congressmen were doubtful if the budgeted money would be appropriated and pointed out that part of the funds scheduled in previous years had never been appropriated. In other words, previously planned work has not been done because no money was available.

#### The Best Way

Ira Gabrielson, president of the Wildlife Management Institute, recently wrote an article on "The Best Way To Manage Fish and Game" for Outdoor America, publication of the Izaak Walton League.

Gabrielson, who has had long experience in the conservation field, has observed many state systems in operation. He says that the best system of administration yet devised approaches closely a model game law developed by a committee of the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners in the early 1930's with the aid of the Izaak Walton League.

Quoting from Gabrielson, here's the plan:

The system provides for a commission with plenty of power, power over policy and budget, with an administrator selected by the commission but free to carry out the policies and program of the commission.

The Commission system has its faults, all right, but these pale before the flaws in the present strong tendency toward establishing an all-inclusive and all-embracing department of conservation or natural resources.

The natural resources department idea is generally supported by those who believe in a strong, central government completely under the thumb of the governor, including some theory-blinded students of government as well as partisan politicians; and every budget officer who chafes at having his operations restricted by earmarked funds.

Among the reasons usually advanced for advocating this type of administration are:

1. It would centralize administra-

tion and give the governor control of the management of the state government and of the budget.

2. It would eliminate earmarked funds.

3. It would provide better integration of resource administration. . . .

Theoretically, putting management of all natural resources under one roof sounds good. But as a matter of cold, practical operation, wherever minerals and oil have been placed in an overall department, it has almost invariably resulted in the complete domination of the department by powerful commercial interests and the sweeping aside of the interests of the general public when there was any conflict with the desires of the oil or mineral people. In two cases within recent years, such departments have been established only to have fish and game pulled out of the overall department because of the sportsmen's dislike of the results of such administration. ●

## THE GAME LAW VIOLATOR IS A THIEF!



HELP  
SEE TO IT  
THAT THE  
GAME LAWS  
ARE RESPECTED  
IN YOUR  
COMMUNITY—  
IN YOUR COUNTY—  
IN YOUR STATE!

THE WILD GAME AND  
FISH OF FLORIDA BELONG  
TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF  
FLORIDA—THE GAME LAW  
VIOLATOR IN EFFECT IS  
STEALING FROM

**You!**

FLORIDA GAME AND FRESH WATER FISH COMMISSION





**H**ARDLY AN ITEM of an angler's equipment gets more use or is more important to his well-being than his tackle box. In Florida, where most anglers do some salt-water fishing, the problem becomes even more acute than usual. In the years before the last war, I used an average of two tackle boxes a year. They rusted, corroded, dissolved, and were generally unsatisfactory. Just after the war, I again bought a boat and then looked around for a tackle box that would be perfectly suited to my Florida needs. I, also, wanted one that would last awhile. The one I built then, I am still using, after 15 years of hard service. I thought it might prove interesting to you readers.

My friend, Maynard Merritt of Miami, is an avid and expert angler and, also, an expert cabinetmaker. When I told him what I wanted in a tackle box, he drew up a set of plans and helped me cut out the first box. This was made of glamorous mahogany plywood, screw fastened throughout. It had brass

By **CHUCK SCHILLING**

corner plates and fancy hardware. It looked more like an expensive piece of furniture than a tackle box.

Frankly, this first box was so showy, I hated to use it, and when a friend of mine from the north admired it profusely, I made him a gift of it on the spot. Then I built another tackle box exactly like the first, this time using plain, waterproof plywood and brass nails. This is the box I am still using. Merritt, the designer, recognized the limitations of most home craftsmen and so kept construction plans simple and easy.

This tackle box stands 12 inches high, is 8 inches deep, and 15-3/4 inches wide. Except for the three drawers, it is built throughout of 3/8-inch, 5-ply Weldwood. The drawers have 3/8-inch side pieces (to take the slots) but the front, back, and bottom pieces are made of one-quarter, 3-ply stock. The two dividers in the big bottom drawer are of one-quarter inch stock, while the dividers in the two smaller



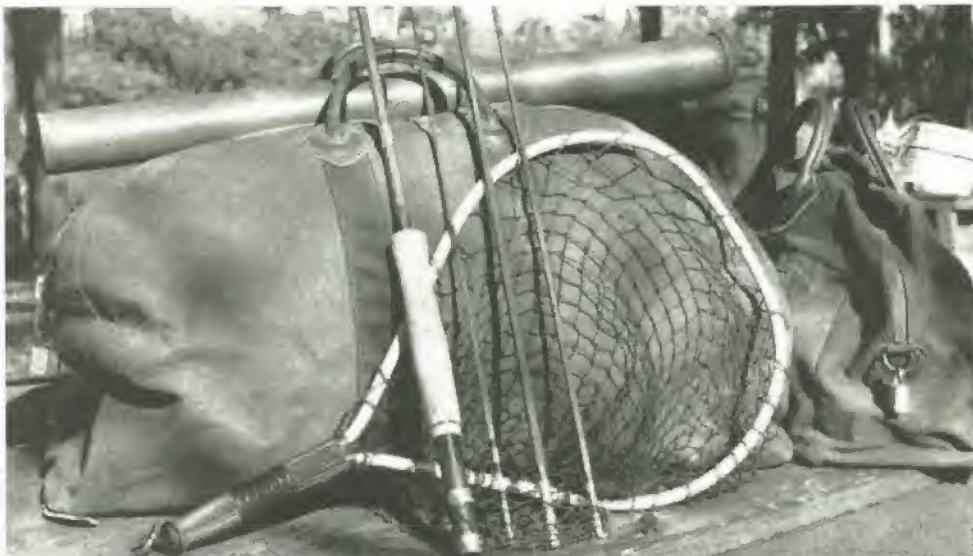
drawers are made of basswood Venetian blind slats.

Bottom of top compartment is one-quarter inch plywood, the lid itself is 1-1/8 inches deep inside, while the top compartment is 1-6/8 inches deep. This forms an over-all inside dimension of the top compartment of 15" x 7-1/4" x 2-1/4". I have subdivided this area in my own box on a diagonal and keep all manner of often-used items in it.

The two small drawers are 1-1/2 inches deep inside, and the big bottom drawer is 3-1/4 inches deep inside. The big drawer has three equal compartments, while the smaller ones have 11 compartments each that are large enough for a big plug. I keep a fish knife in a holder built into the lid, as well as a coil of stainless wire, my fishing license, an ignition points file, and my book of Solunar Tables.

One of the best features of this tackle box is the drop front. This panel exposes the drawers and holds and protects them in the up position. Panel will slide into the bottom of box when dropped down. Box lid has a full length brass piano hinge and a fold-flat, brass, carrying handle. This tackle box can be built at home by anyone with a little talent and simple tools. Cost is just a few dollars.

I use this tackle box for much more than just to hold my fishing gear. Its shape is carefully designed to provide an extra seat for comfort in a long day's boat fishing. It becomes a chair-high seat for rowing, with full leg room giving proper leverage on the blades. It becomes



My duffel bag is large enough to take net and rods as well as fishing clothes, rain gear, etc. When traveling light, the tackle bag will go into the duffel bag as well.





#1 Overall Construction



#2 Drawer Pulls



#3 Completely Open



#4 Panel Slots

a seat for the helmsman on long runs, putting him in the center of the boat for better balance and trim, and making conversation between passengers a lot more pleasant. For all these purposes, I use one or two boat cushions on top of the box, depending on how high a seat is desirable.

I think the pictures accompanying this article will show most of the detail of this box's construction. All fastenings should be noncorrosive and all joints glued with waterproof resin.

Picture #1: This shows the overall construction detail. I built the top of the box solid and then cut the lid section off on a table saw. Using a handsaw here requires great care. Cut is 1-5/8 inches from the top. Top and bottom pieces are 8"x15"-3/4", side pieces 8"x11", back (before lid cut) 11"x15", front panel

(before cut) 3"x15", drop panel 7 7/8" x 14 7/8".

Picture #2: Please notice the finger holes used as drawer pulls and the drop panel, dowel and latch arrangement. Note the one-quarter inch dowel nailed to the bottom, rear, inside edge of the drop panel. This dowel extends out past the panel sides for about one-quarter inch. These extensions run in slots cut into the box sides. This hinges the panel at the bottom and allows it to slide into the bottom of the box.

Also note the hole in top edge of the drop panel. This takes a brass pin that goes through the front panel in back of the latch and locks the drop panel at the top.

Picture #3: Here is the box completely opened.

Picture #4: Please note the slot cut in the bottom of the side panel, in which the drop panel dowel rides. Also note the drawer rails that hold the drawers in place. These are 6-1/2"x1/2"x1/8". Both the drawer rails and grooves are painted with hot paraffin for easy, long lasting use. Picture #5: This shows the rail slot in the side pieces of the drawers. These are cut two-ply deep in the five-ply sides. Note the drawer bottom extends out a little from the back piece. These are left a little long so they can be finally adjusted to make the drawer fronts fit flush and tight when the drop panel is closed.

It is my opinion anyone can build this tackle box using these direc-



#5 Rail Slots

tions. Of course, dimensions can be adjusted to fit your own needs. Built properly, it will last a lifetime; used properly, it can take much of the leg cramps, stiff backs, and general fatigue from boat fishing.

### Tackle Bags

Of course a tackle box such as mine is really only meant for boat use. How about a tackle box for the traveling fisherman? I long ago gave up hard boxes for traveling use. For years now, I have been using a canvas tackle bag made by the L. L. Bean Company of Freeport, Maine. Before I finally found this Bean bag, I tried several of the usual bags of this sort, none of which lasted more than a trip or two.

Most of these zipper bags just won't do as a fishing companion. Most are flimsily made, using small,  
(continued on page 40)





By EDMUND McLAURIN

**D**URING THE RECENT Florida chain of winter trapshoots—held on a round-robin circuit at Miami, Palm Beach, Sarasota, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Orlando and Daytona Beach, almost a million shotshells were exploded by competing shotgunners. That's a lot of ammunition, no matter how considered!

At the St. Petersburg shoot, for example, consumption was so rapid and voluminous that range personnel designated to keep firing points clean of empties and ready for succeeding firing squads used oversize rakes and wheelbarrows to do their jobs with a minimum loss of time between scheduled firing sessions.

However, aside from expressing personal preferences for certain name brands of shotgun shells among the variety of wares stocked by shoot sponsors for the convenience of competitors, few among the hundreds who fired at the whizzing clays likely gave much thought to shotshell components and the manufacturing operations represented by each chambered shell.

Most of the mental effort was expended in concentrating on targets and in later figuring the cost of tournament participation, no small part of which was shotshell expense. To certain veteran shooters, the increased cost of ammunition consumed prompted rueful mental comparisons with yesteryear. . . .

Undeniably, shotgun shell cost to the heavy shooter can flatten his billfold in short order. . . .

One factor that makes shotgun shells cost so much more today than they did ten or fifteen years ago is the increased cost of the raw materials which the ammunition makers must buy before they can begin to manufacture a finished,

ready-to-use product. Raw lead and brass, for example, cost twice what they did during the years 1945 to 1950. Increased labor costs must also be considered.

Even so, the modern shotgun shell represents a lot of value, considering the ingredients and the operations required to produce it, especially so when one compares unit price with such everyday items as shoelaces, zippers, soap and lead pencils. Shotshell unit cost merely seems much higher than compared commodities, because acquisition and consumption of finished product is usually concentrated, in respect to purchase—if not use.

Often overlooked when shell cost is lamented is the fact that the average shotgun shell has fourteen components—tube body, brass head, six integrated primer components, powder charge, base wad, two filler wads, shot load and a paper disc in the crimped end of the shell—and that some 212 manufacturing operations and 101 different chemical ingredients are involved in the creation of a single ready-to-shoot shotgun shell.

In making shot, lead ingots are melted and alloyed to correct hardness. Next step is to form the individual small, round shot. This is accomplished by pouring the molten metal through screens or perforated "skillets" of various mesh diameters from a height of around 160 feet, into a water tank. The formed, cooled shot are then screened through the perforated cylindrical surface of a revolving drum to remove imperfect pellets—those not uniform in size and round. Final

screening consists of rolling the shot down tilted sheets of plate glass separated by a narrow gutter. Perfect shot have just enough momentum to hurdle the narrow trench; irregular, off-round pellets fall into it as salvaged lead for re-melting.

The remaining perfect shot are coated with graphite, after which the small shot are ready for loading into shells.

(Copperized shot are obtained by putting perfectly formed lead shot through a plating bath and giving the resulting product additional culling.)

Most popular shot sizes today are 7½, 6 and 4. Loads of 7½ shot are popular with upland game bird gunners and Skeet shooters. Loads of size No. 6 are widely used by squirrel shooters and for certain other types of shooting not exceeding forty yards, and size No. 4, of course, is the average duck hunter's choice. . . . I personally consider size 7½ shot the best all-around size made. With it, I have killed plenty of dove, quail, rabbits, turkey (head shots) and decoying ducks, besides finding the same size ideal for trap and Skeet. . . .

Filler wads are press-punched from a long, moving belt of hair felt, or whatever wad material the particular manufacturer uses. Top, or powder, wads are likewise punched from ⅛" cardboard.

To make the paper case or tube, extra tough sheets of shell-tube paper are formed into long cylinders, coated with paraffin and air dried. These coated tubes are then cut to proper shell lengths in ma-



chines having multiple, disk-like cutters.

In another department, brass shell heads are being stamped by the thousands from large sheets of brass. Each disc is then annealed to reduce brittleness and roughly shaped into a flanged cup by dies working under uniform pressure. Further formation of finished product involves drawing and trimming the shaped head, forming the flange and embossing the brass to receive the paper tube, next fitted. A wad of wound paper also goes into the unprimed shell head to protect the head when the shell explodes.

In the manufacture of high velocity, or "high brass," shells, the exterior brass head or cup is normally made with higher walls than for field and target loads. (The term should not be confused with "high base," which refers to the filler used inside the brass head section. . . . Actually, present day "high base" filler cups are only medium height, as compared with those formerly used to load shells with Ballistite powder. . . .)

Other machines have been working on the primer assembly that is

fitted in the punched, brass case heads. Primer-making is a precise, many faceted manufacturing operation, since it involves manufacture and assembly of anvil, battery cup, primer cup, fulminate and paper disc components.

These finished primers are individually fitted to single shell heads by fast-working machines.

The primed shell cases are routed via feeder tubes to other machines to be packed with smokeless powder, wads and shot, then crimped and sealed, ready for final inspection and packaging. . . .

Early black powder mixtures of saltpetre, carbon and sulphur have long since given way to countless modern formulas for smokeless type powders. These new explosives go by a variety of trade names. DuPont MX, Acapnia, Nike, "MB," "AL-5" and "AL-6" are only a few of the available shotgun shell powers.

(It is generally believed the Chinese invented gunpowder. However, there are some dissenters among the historians. Roger Bacon and Friar Berthold are two others regarded as discoverers. Bacon did mention gunpowder in his writings

of the year 1249, but most authorities believe the Chinese were the true inventors and initial users.)

Old-type powders abruptly developed maximum energy practically at the instant the charge of shot was started forward through the gun barrel. Black powder, a holdover from yesteryear, is in this class.

Modern, progressive burning powders, on the other hand, burn relatively slowly and develop energy gradually. They reach a point of maximum energy only after the shot charge has been well started. The result is high velocity and less deformation of shot.

However, there is a limit to the maximum shot velocity that can be loaded into a shotgun shell. For one thing, the shot charge cannot be moved much faster than 1,000 feet a second without ruining the effective pattern, no matter what the choke boring of the gun. . . .

During all shotshell manufacturing operations, and before finished, ready-to-use shells are released for shipment to dealers, inspectors and technicians are constantly at work. In test firing, shotshells must function reliably in a variety of guns of corresponding gauge. Among other conducted tests, ballistic engineers make close check of uniform velocity and effective, even shot distribution of test-fired shells.

Around 1920, shotshells were produced in thousands of different shot sizes and shell velocities. Factories honored special orders based on expressed personal preferences, with ultimate confusion among uninformed shooters. Standardization of shot sizes factory loaded—by agreement among the manufacturers—and the development of better powders, improved wads and the folded crimp, together, give today's shooter the best and most practical shell loadings to be had. Next step will probably be adoption of some sort of plastic shell case (already perfected and used by Dutch and Italian munition makers), or perhaps a completely self-consuming shotgun shell. Mean-

(continued on page 34)



Although mass produced, a shotgun shell contains fourteen component parts, and involves some 212 manufacturing operations.



# FLORIDA'S STRIPED BASS

By HORACE LOFTIN

The Commission's  
newest research program  
may mean more  
and different fishing  
thrills for  
Florida sportsmen

**D**EARNED GAR!" The fisherman's cane pole dipped sharply and snapped from a mighty tug from below. Gars and busted poles weren't worth the trouble, he thought, so he pulled up anchor and quit. Fishing seemed mighty poor on the Apalachicola that day.

Farther upstream, just below the Jim Woodruff Dam where the current flows swiftest, another fisherman cast an artificial eel into the racing water. A heavy weight held the lure down as it bounced along the bottom. Suddenly, the big rod bent under the weight of a solid strike. The

ensuing battle was a hard one and a long one, but the combination of right tackle and experienced fisherman finally saw the big fish on the bank—30 pounds of striped bass! This fisherman thought fishing was mighty good on the Apalachicola that day!

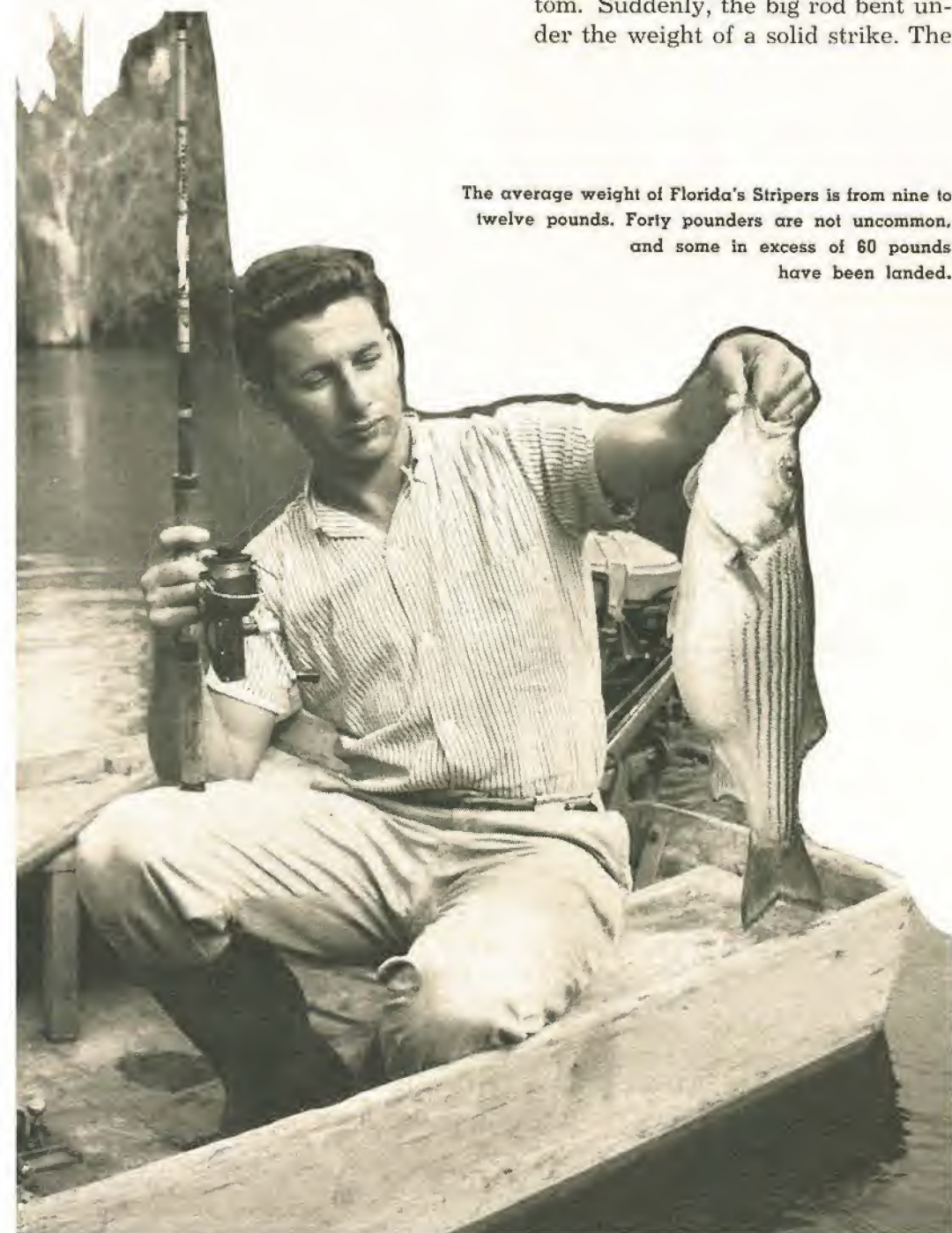
For years, river fishermen along the Florida Panhandle have been losing gear to "gars, logs and turtles." Now that the secret is out about the striped bass in northwest Florida, this battler must be credited for a good share of lost light tackle.

It has been known for a long time that the striped bass (mostly called rock bass or just plain rockfish) could be caught in the Panhandle, but only a few sportsmen armed with the proper tackle and bait managed to take many of them. Most of the earlier stripers were caught in the lower reaches of the Chipola, Apalachicola, Escambia and other large river systems, as well as around White City, the Dead Lakes, Lake Wimico and the Intracoastal Waterway. Not many stripers were taken upriver in Florida then, but some were taken across the border in Georgia.

The current striper rush began shortly after the Jim Woodruff Dam was completed. The big stripers went way up into Georgia to spawn in the old days, but now the dam halts and concentrates most of them in the Florida stretch of the Apalachicola. Luck in the Apalachicola sent anglers looking for stripers in other Florida rivers. Today more striped bass are being taken in northwest Florida than ever before.

Fish weighing from nine to 12 pounds are being taken regularly upriver, and some of the biggest range up to 45 pounds. Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission personnel obtained actual weights of 17 striped bass taken

The average weight of Florida's Stripers is from nine to twelve pounds. Forty pounders are not uncommon, and some in excess of 60 pounds have been landed.







Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission technicians obtain striper specimens by "netting" methods. The fish are then tagged with numbered discs (above) and released.



Commission Photos By Wallace Hughes

Fishermen catching tagged fish are asked to return the discs to the Commission's Tallahassee office. These tags are placed high on the striper's back, below the soft dorsal fin.

from the Jim Woodruff Dam catwalk, December 12-16, 1959. Total weight of these fish was 237 pounds. Nine of them weighed more than 15 pounds apiece, and six weighed more than 20 pounds apiece.

The picture is even brighter farther downstream. During the coldest months especially, striped bass weighing 40 pounds and over are taken rather frequently. These big ones have been caught mostly in the Dead Lakes—Wimico—Intra-coastal Waterway area especially.

Upriver, fishermen are catching good-size stripers on shoals near the mouths of spring-fed creeks. The ones taken from the tailrace of dams seem to average a little smaller. For tailrace fishing, either heavy freshwater or light saltwater tackle is being used. Around the creek mouths, lighter tackle can be employed, since the current is not so swift and fishing is usually done

from a boat there. Favorite baits for river fishing are eels—live or artificial—, threadfin shad, or heavy lures. The best results have come from fishing on the bottom.

Angling for the 40-pounders downstream usually calls for heavier gear. Live shrimp, fished on the bottom, is an effective bait. Even heavy saltwater line is being snapped in two by some big fish downriver and in the lakes. The world's record for striped bass taken with rod and reel is 73 pounds, made in 1913 off Massachusetts. Makes you wonder if there isn't a record-breaker waiting to be taken in the Florida Panhandle!

The striped bass "rush" really means that a whole new sports fishery is opening up in Florida. And this poses some tough problems:

1. How much fishing pressure can

the striped bass take and still maintain its present numbers and average size?

2. What can fish management experts do to increase the abundance of striped bass over the present level in areas already being fished?

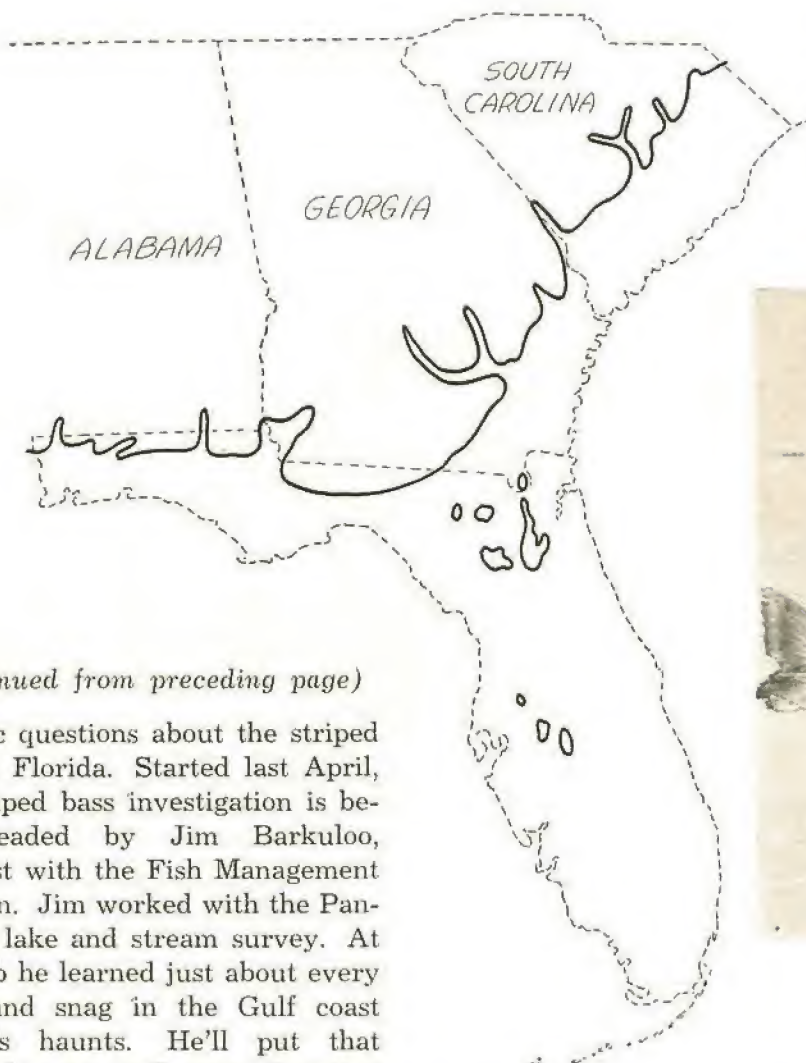
3. Can striped bass be introduced into areas where they are not now present?

4. What kind of regulation of the fishery—if any—is needed to control the striped bass take in order to yield the maximum number of fish for the sportsmen without hurting the breeding capacity of the striped bass population?

Before any of these important questions can be answered intelligently, we have to learn a whole lot about this "mystery fish." The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission has already begun an ambitious program to find the answers

*(continued on next page)*





The range of the striped bass extends from the St. Lawrence River to Louisiana. Since stripers are not found around peninsula Florida, it is believed that the Gulf coast striper got cut off from his eastern kinfolks many years ago when the coastline of Florida and Georgia was as indicated by the solid black line on map shown at left.

Commission Photo By Bill Hansen



Project Leader Jim Barkuloo holds frozen specimen taken from the Intercoastal Waterway, a few miles east of Panama City. This striper weighed 41 pounds.

(continued from preceding page)

to basic questions about the striped bass in Florida. Started last April, the striped bass investigation is being headed by Jim Barkuloo, biologist with the Fish Management Division. Jim worked with the Panhandle lake and stream survey. At that job he learned just about every twist and snag in the Gulf coast striper's haunts. He'll put that knowledge to work now ferreting out the striper's secrets. Ernie Grover is working with Barkuloo as fish management specialist.

The striped bass investigation is designed to get several jobs done. The first of these is straight forward enough: to find out just where and in what abundance the striped bass can be found in Florida. On the basis of old reports, present fishing results, and preliminary observations by Barkuloo, the broad range of the Gulf coast striper is fairly well worked out. On the Gulf coast, the striped bass has been taken in some abundance in all the major river systems from the Ochlockonee westward to the Perdido on the Alabama line. (The striped bass is also reported westward to Louisiana.) But the details of how the striped bass is distributed in the rivers and creeks of west Florida remains to be worked out.

The easternmost report of a striper on the Gulf coast seems to be from the St. Marks River. Does

this fish extend farther east and south along the peninsula? Does it migrate up the Suwannee? Questions like these will call for a lot of exploratory fishing, using seines, tackle, electrical equipment and even aqualungs and spears, before the actual range of the Gulf coast striper will be finally spelled out.

So far as is known, there are no striped bass along the lower portion of peninsular Florida on either the west or east coasts. But another population of stripers put in their appearance in the St. Johns River. These east coast bass differ from the Gulf coast variety in a number of ways. The east coast striper's habits are more like the striped bass found along the Atlantic farther to the north. Apparently, the Gulf coast striper got cut off from his eastern kinfolks when the Florida peninsula rose from the sea following the last Ice Age, some 25,000 or more years ago.

Along with the exploratory phase

of the investigation, Barkuloo and Grover are piecing together the life histories of the Gulf and east coast stripers. This work is at the very heart of sound management of this growing sport fishery. We still have to learn where, when, and how the big fish spawn and what kind of water and bottom they need for most favorable reproduction. There are already some good guesses around concerning these points, but nobody knows the real facts for Florida stripers yet. Then we must find out about the nursery grounds: what kind of food and surroundings the young fish need for maximum growth and survival. How long does it take them to reach reproductive age and gamefish size?

We have the answers to most of these questions for the largemouth bass, crappie, and other old favorites, and on this knowledge our management policies are based. But, frankly, the Florida striped bass is still a mystery fish, even when it is





Research work includes a complete check of food and habitat requirements, the striper's distribution, and their growth rates.

Commission Photos By Wallace Hughes



Scales from the striped bass are collected to study age and growth. Placed under a microscope, these scales reveal 'rings' indicating age of the fish. Each ring represents one year.

compared with the striped bass of the Atlantic coast north of Florida.

Take their migratory habits, for example. For years fishery biologists have been studying the big stripers of the Chesapeake Bay-to-Massachusetts area and know their ways pretty well. These Yankee stripers are essentially salt water fish, appearing in great schools along the outer banks where they gladden the hearts of surf casters. At spawning

Known locally as rock bass, or rockfish, striped bass have long been a fishing and food favorite for anglers along the Panhandle rivers.

time they run into the rivers, deposit their eggs, and after a stay in fresh water move back to sea.

But our Gulf coast striper is yet to be reported from the salt waters of the Gulf of Mexico!

(If you know of a verifiable record of a striped bass being caught in Florida marine waters, please let Jim Barkuloo know about it immediately! Write in care of FLORIDA WILDLIFE.)

The way the few pieces we have of the puzzle fit together now, it appears that the Gulf Coast striper

may get only to brackish water. It is taken upriver mostly from spring into winter. They seem to pass the coldest part of the year far downstream. Little stripers are found upriver almost any month of the year, so the young probably stay there at least until their second year.

To find out when and where the striped bass spawn in Florida waters, Barkuloo and Grover will periodically drag small, fine-meshed nets in various kinds of river situations—upstream and down, in creeks, over rock, mud, sand, etc. Based on the number of eggs the nets come up with through the year in the different localities, this phase of the mystery of the striped bass should soon be solved.

The fishery biologists will have to go "minnow chasing" to check the food and habitat requirements of baby stripers, their distribution and their growth rates. But once the biologists start after the secrets of mama and papa striped bass, the work and tempo will pick up sharply. The big ones will be collected by skin-diving, by hook and line, by electrical gear, haul seines, gill nets, hoop nets—any way the biologists can get hold of them. Interviews with sportsmen and creel censuses will yield a store of information.

From such research, data on  
(continued on page 36)







Commission Photo by Jake Johnson

I PAY A VISIT TO - -

# THE FLYING WILDLIFE OFFICER

By GEORGE X. SAND

**T**HE TIME IS 7:20. Ten minutes earlier, just as the winter sun arose, you took off from Bradley Field at Fort Lauderdale in Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission plane N7193D. In the forward seat of the 150 Super Cub Flying Wildlife Officer Lewis "Cossie" Conrad is scanning the thinly flooded brown face of the sawgrass Everglades, scarcely 150 feet below.

Cossie is young, stocky, quiet. A good pilot. An ex-Navy man, he lives with his wife at Fort Lauderdale. He was waiting with his ship on the line when you drove up. He knows his bosses at Tallahassee want you to see for yourself how it is practically impossible to hide a game violation from the watching eyes of the Commission's air arm.

Well, you're ready to be shown. You've often wondered about this as you paused in the Big Cypress or some other remote hunting area to watch one of the Commission's light planes drone past overhead. You've watched other sportsmen, too, as they paused to listen, with eyes thoughtfully upraised.

Cossie drops the left wing, using it as a pointer to indicate something below. "Deer," he says.

You clutch the camera in your lap as he puts the small plane into a tight bank. For an instant the brown world below spins crazily. Then you see the deer. Two of them. They splash through shallow water as they run. One is a nice buck.

Cossie flies southward until you pick up the Tamiami Trail immediately behind Miami. He follows this highway westward, studying the flow of traffic below. It is a weekend, always a time of considerable hunting activity along the Trail.

You note an occasional swamp buggy or other hunting vehicle being towed behind its owner's car. Most are enroute to the Big Cypress. For the season has barely opened and the air is charged with anticipation.

The pilot deserts the highway abruptly to follow a



As the Commission plane flew low over the sawgrass country, a big buck halted and looked us over. Willy deer often disappear beneath tall grass, not to be seen again — even from the air.



pair of swamp buggy tracks as the parallel ruts veer off into the sawgrass. He turns in his seat to ask, "How old would you say those buggy tracks were?"

You study the bent-over grass. You guess that they look pretty fresh.

Cossie shakes his head. "They're at least two days old. Notice how the grass tops have returned to the same dull color as the unmashed tops on either side of the trail. A fresh track will always show up glossy where the buggy has turned over new grass that hasn't been exposed to the sun. The same goes for an airboat trail."

Shortly you fly over another trail, a fresh one this time. It angles northwestward, toward the Big Cypress, and Cossie promptly follows it.

An idea comes to you. "If this guy down there had gotten into the swamp before we cut his trail you'd have no sawgrass to tell you how fresh his trail was—if he left any trail at all," you tell your companion. "There'd be no sawgrass—most likely nothing but water."

Cossie smiles again at that. "We could still tell," he assures you. "Most of that swamp bottom is marl. If anyone has been over it within a day—even two days—in a vehicle or walking, it stays muddy and is easy to spot from the air."



From the air, swamp buggy trails often appear as senseless maze, going in all directions. Trained Commission pilots can tell at a glance how long it has been since such vehicles have passed through sawgrass country.



Commission pilot swoops low for closer look at hunter's swamp vehicle being towed over Tamiami Trail to Big Cypress Swamp launching site. Weekend activity is heavy during hunting season.

You sit back. Your respect for the pilot's ability is steadily increasing.

Before long Cossie drops the wing again. You glance down. You've caught up with the track-maker. He's driving a motorized contraption that somewhat resembles a cableless truck with a bulky building contractor's tool shack mounted behind. Two companions bounce alongside the driver on the uncomfortable front seat.

As the shadow of the plane flicks over them the three men glance upward. One gives a brief wave. Then they resume their conversation.

"It's always a good sign when everything appears calm like that," Cossie says as you continue on your way. "You can pretty much tell from the manner in which men and vehicles—even planes—are operating whether they're apt to be engaged in game or fish violations. Particularly when you move in close overhead to observe how they react to your being there."

"Suppose they're in camp," you bait. "A camp can be made to look awfully innocent. And if there's no place handy for you to land nearby, as there likely wouldn't be way out here, what can you do then?"

"We pay close attention to the location of such camps, for one thing. Especially when they are pitched close to areas where hunting is not permitted. Take the Collier hunt area, for instance. We've had trouble from fellows who camp just on the inside of the open

*(continued on next page)*





During the hunting season you're apt to see most any kind of swamp vehicle lumbering deep into the Big Cypress swamp.

*(continued from preceding page)*

country there, then walk over to hunt illegally in the posted turkey breeding grounds.

"From the air, however, if you've learned how to look closely, you can easily spot their footprints. A quick call on the plane's radio then brings in the Commission's ground units—airboats, swamp buggies or whatever other vehicles may be needed—to check out your suspicions."

"You spoke earlier of planes," you remind him. "How are these used by violators?"

"Several ways. One favorite trick is to 'rally' ducks. A pilot can keep birds stirred up on a calm day to the point where sooner or later they can be expected to fly into the decoys where his friends await in their blinds. In fact, with a plane you can run a duck in just about any direction you want, just like you'd drive a cow.

"However, you can see a pilot doing this from miles away. All you need do is stand off and watch him through glasses to make sure. I generally carry a witness with me, so the case will better stand up in court. A radio call then brings in ground units—either boats or airboats—to move in upon the blinds. From the air these stand out like sore thumbs and you simply circle over them until all the arrests are made."

"Aren't airboats sometimes used, also, for such rallying?"

"Yes. And those fellows are even simpler to apprehend, since every airboat carries a large registration number painted on its steering fin."

"What has been your most exciting apprehension case?" you ask.

"Several years ago biologist Jim Powell and I were making an alligator count in the Miami Canal. I was based at Okeechobee at the time and we'd taken off from there to follow the canal southeastward toward Miami. We were flying low, just taking our time and

Commission pilot spots conventional drive hunter's vehicle bogged down in swamp, with caterpillar buggy set to tow out.



looking, when unexpectedly we came upon this swamp buggy stopped beside a 'gator hole.

"There were three men in the buggy, way out here in the middle of the Glades. I guessed what they were up to as soon as we saw them.

"We grabbed some altitude so we could circle and watch them. We saw them scurry around in the sawgrass and pick up a 'gator that must have been 10 feet long. Now that's a big 'gator for three men to pick up, much less throw atop a high buggy. They did it, however, and took off toward the north. I guess they were pretty scared.

"They were in Broward County at the time, about 10 miles to the county north line. It was too soft to land out there. So we got on the radio to call for assistance. Meanwhile, on the lumbering swamp buggy below we could see the hide hunters beginning to cut up the big 'gator. They were hacking chunks from the unskinned carcass and throwing these pieces off as they plunged through the thick sawgrass. They were getting rid of the evidence they knew we'd need to make a case against them.

"After several miles of this they managed to get rid of the big 'gator completely. They halted then while we continued to circle tightly overhead. I wondered what they would do next. It was about 11 o'clock in the morning.

"We didn't have long to wait. The men had several sacks of skinned-out 'gator hides aboard their buggy—carcasses, too—and now they dumped these quickly to the ground. We were flying so low I could see that this stuff made a pile about three feet high. The hide hunters began to hack at this pile with their machetes. Then they dumped gasoline on this last evidence and set it afire. When they were convinced it was burning good they got back aboard their buggy and took off again toward Palm Beach County.

"It was nearly noon now. I had pulled flaps on the



plane, so we could throttle down and use about one-third the normal gas consumption. Jim and I knew now we had some flying ahead of us. The Commission didn't have a buggy operating at the time in this portion of the State and our area supervisor, J. O. Brown of Hollywood, had told us by radio he'd have to borrow a vehicle to make the apprehension. Powell and I would just have to remain above the poachers and wait.

"Around 2 o'clock Brown and a companion appeared with the borrowed swamp buggy on U.S. Highway 27 from Hollywood to launch it at the point we designated to be nearest the quarry. They hadn't gotten a hundred feet from the road, however, when they broke an axle! This put us right back where we'd begun—except that the violators had covered a considerable distance toward home.

"Jim and I now radioed another area supervisor for aid, Skeeter Thompson, over at La Belle. Thompson was about 75 miles away from us by highway. He didn't have a swamp vehicle at hand, but made quick arrangements by radio to pick up a Commission buggy at Clewiston. He told us cheerfully to hang on, that he was on the way with help. . . .

"By this time we'd been flying steadily for nearly five hours—since take-off at 10 that morning—and our wing tank gauges were dropping steadily. It would be another couple of hours before Thompson could get here. I radioed for other Commission units to leave emergency gas for us at Cabassa farm, which lies off Highway 27 in this region. If necessary, we'd scoot over there to land and refuel.

"Meanwhile, it was important we remain over the violation vehicle as long as possible, in case the poachers should desert it. By this time the men below had obviously changed their minds about going on home, despite the fact they'd gotten rid of all damaging evidence. Instead, they'd set a course westward, into what was one of the wildest parts of the Everglades.

"It was 4 o'clock that afternoon before Supervisor

Thompson arrived from Clewiston. He picked up a couple of our officers waiting beside the highway, and, as they left the road to take to the sawgrass, Jim and I led them straight toward their quarry.

"When the hide hunters spotted this maneuver they knew exactly from what quarter to expect trouble. They took off at high speed to begin what would be probably the wildest Everglades chase I've ever seen. Had not the consequences been so serious—stiff prison sentences and heavy fines hanging over the lawbreakers' heads—it could even have appeared ludicrous as our officers proceeded to chase those fellows back and forth, all over the Glades. Those hide hunters knew the sawgrass well.

"It was real rough going over those sawgrass pods at full speed, believe me. Jim and I could see our fellows hanging on. To make matters worse, the repeated pounding kept jarring the connections loose inside the buggy's radio, so we had difficulty giving them instructions on how to head-off the constantly zig-zagging men unseen in the tall sawgrass ahead of them. Each time we lost contact thus we'd have to buzz the Commission buggy and yell from the plane for them to repair their set again.

"The violators, meanwhile, were dodging and doubling back on their own trail like a rabbit trying to shake a hound. The grass was higher than both buggies and neither driver could see a dozen feet ahead. How they managed to miss the many 'gator holes in that area—any one of which would have bogged them down—remains a mystery to me.

"Nevertheless, thanks to the plane, the fleeing men didn't have a chance. Gradually Brown and the other officers wore them down. About 5:30 that afternoon we saw two of the hide hunters leap from their buggy

*(continued on page 32)*

We landed at camp of R. W. "Griff" Griffin, deep in Big Cypress country. Flying Wildlife Officer Lewis "Cossie" Conrad, left, discusses deer hunting with veteran Glades camper Griffin.







Fun on a swamp buggy at the Big Cypress Jamboree.



Explorers set up camping sites for visitors to the annual jamboree.

# BIG CYPRESS

**T**HE BIG CYPRESS was jumpin' when the Everglades Conservation and Sportsman's club held its 10th annual Big Cypress Jamboree and Wild Hog Barbecue.

The spreading fame of this annual event caused 2,250 people to drive deep into the heart of Collier county's Big Cypress south of Monroe station on the Tamiami Trail to chomp on wildhog meat, eat Florida's famous swamp cabbage salad and such standard table fare as cole slaw, beans, buns, domestic ribs and chicken.

During the two-day event—which was expanded into a Saturday and Sunday affair for the first time this year (1960) to accommodate the steadily increasing crowds—the visitors consumed better than three tons of hog, ribs and chicken. The 3,283 pounds of wild hog, of course, was the prime dish, but the outdoor eaters back this with 950 pounds of ribs and some 1,900 pounds of barbecued chicken. More than 200 head of swamp cabbage were consumed along with gallons of coffee, cold drinks and beans, flavored with wild hog meat.

Visitors came from as far as Cocoa and Key West, and one group even arrived a day early, coming on Thursday afternoon. The Conservation club members, however, weren't perturbed, and treated the "early-

Skeet shooters, left center, blasted away throughout the day. Many fine exhibits, lower left, attract considerable attention. Indian relics from Florida, outdoor pictures, and tree snail shells were among the items exhibited.





early" guests to wildhog barbecue and took them on impromptu swamp buggy rides.

A new feature this year was Saturday night's old-fashioned square dance which attracted some 200 dancers, who rollicked until the wee hours in the Cypress. Many even pitched their tents and camped on the club grounds.

The two-day affair featured something for everyone, with the free swamp buggy rides attracting top attention. The club members drove their buggies from 10 a.m. to sunset each day, and there was never a lack of riders.

The program also included turkey, archery, trap, skeet and B-B gun shoots; primitive camp exhibits; a display of Florida tree snails; Seminole Indians; conservation exhibits and plenty of sunshine and cypress atmosphere.

Funds from the barbecue and the club's annual membership drive held at the same time are used to carry on the organization's conservation program. During its ten years of existence, the club has conducted a deer restocking program and has cooperated with Wildlife officials by putting out turkey feeders and creating water holes during droughts. The club also provides free primitive camping facilities to Boy and Girl Scout troops. ●



Mighty tasty eatin' — says Mrs. Lilly Caserta about the barbecued wild hog servings.

# JAMBOREE

Photo Story By MAX HUNN

Swamp cabbage was another favorite on the menu, right center, and the KP detail here was performed by Harriet and Richard Stanley.

The serving lines, lower right, were hard pressed to keep up with the hungry visitors.

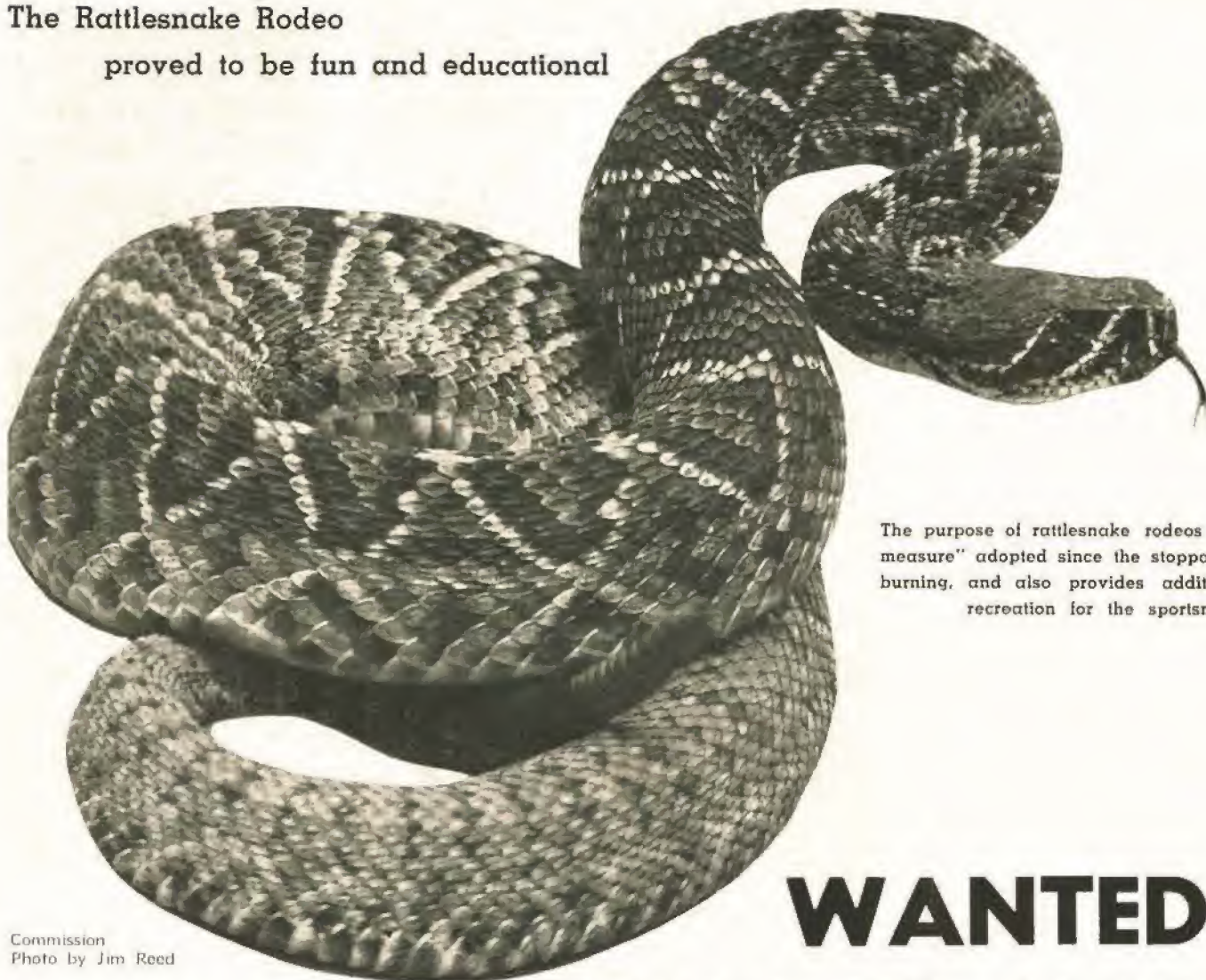


The cooks kept busy preparing wild hog, domestic ribs and chickens for more than 3,000 visitors.





## The Rattlesnake Rodeo proved to be fun and educational



Commission  
Photo by Jim Reed

The purpose of rattlesnake rodeos is a "control measure" adopted since the stoppage of woods-burning, and also provides additional outdoor recreation for the sportsman.

# WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE

By JIM FLOYD

**R**EBEL AND DIXIE, my foot-sore pointers, were asleep in the back among the hunting gear. An ice chest containing a possession limit of quail, and a side of smoked bacon would serve as a peace offering to the wife mate. Not that such offerings were necessary, but past experiences have taught me that similar gestures did much to set the stage for the next jaunt afield.

It had been a pleasant week, and I was savoring the memories as I wheeled the station wagon eastward on U.S. 90. I snapped out of my day dreams and eased up on the gas pedal as I approached a sign indicating I was nearing the city limits of Chipley, county seat of Washington County. Drawing to a stop at a single traffic signal, I noticed a group of people gathered at the side of the highway. My first thoughts were of an accident, then I noticed the banner overhead that stated in large white letters RATTLESNAKE RODEO

HEADQUARTERS. Well, what the heck, it was time to take a coffee break, stretch my legs, and to be completely honest, satisfy my curiosity. Besides I still had another day before reporting back to the salt mines, and bedoggoned if I was going to spoil this trip by rushing back.

I wheeled my buggy into a vacant spot, climbed out and approached the gathering in order to view the object of their attention. As I drew nearer the sound of conversation was broken by the angry buzzing of what sounded like a hundred rattlesnakes. If this noise wouldn't chill your spine and make a quail hunter call in the dogs, nothing would.

Closer observation revealed a large box-like construction mounted on a trailer, with six partitions. The

contents of each section could be viewed through a glass and wire wall and contained about a hundred rattlesnakes. These ranged in size from little bitty critters to grand-pappy bell boys. Some coiled to strike, others stretched out while the majority were amassed in one corner.

My questions of, "What's going on here, who caught these critters, and what in the billy blue blazes are you going to do with them?" must have sounded stupid for it brought forth an assortment of answers ranging from unintelligible grunts to several offers of explanation that promised to turn into camp fire yarns.

My personal dilemma was solved when a rotund individual with a pixie personality took my arm and



directed me toward a frame building marked "Rodeo Headquarters." My escort, who turned out to be the chief of Chipley's Fire Department, said, "Just come with me, boss, and I will introduce you to a man who can answer just any little ole question you might be of a mind to ask."

Steered through the crowd and into the headquarters building, I was introduced to Roy Sanders of the Washington County Sportsmen Club and official weight master of the Rodeo. Roy proceeded to explain the purpose and cause of the commotion and attraction I had noted previously. After several interruptions due to telephone calls, I began to weave a fascinating tale from our broken conversation.

The Washington County Sportsmen were in the final phase of the 1959-60 National Rattlesnake Rodeo. The assortment of snakes I had viewed outside the headquarters were collected from all points of Florida and Alabama by sportsmen and amateur herpetologist. Rodeo rules stipulated that anyone could enter the rodeo by paying a one dollar registration fee and in turn would receive a one dollar bounty for each snake turned in at the rodeo headquarters. These snakes could be either dead or alive. In addition to

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All live rattlers captured are kept in a large box-like construction, divided into six sections, with glass and wire walls for safe viewing.



Lovely Betty Arnold, from Blakely, Ga., was crowned Queen of the Rodeo. With her here is snake-specialist Jerry Tabor of the Ross Allen Reptile Institute, during special evening festivities marking the end of another successful 'snake-hunt.'

Commission Photos By Jim Floyd

Representatives from the Armed Forces attend the rodeos, and give special demonstrations on how these reptiles can be utilized by man for nourishment during survival emergencies.







To evict a rattler from a gopher hole, a length of garden hose is poked in. The hunter places his ear to the open end, listening for that tell-tale buzzing sound.



If the proper 'signal' is received, gasoline is poured into the hose. The hunter then blows the gas (lower left) down inside, and lets the fumes go to work.



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the bounty, contestants were vying for an estimated \$1,000 in rodeo prizes. These prizes were to be presented to the individuals who turned in the longest, heaviest, and most snakes. Prizes were to be awarded in three divisions, Eastern Diamond-back Rattlesnake, Pigmy or Ground Rattlers and Coral snakes.

I noted in the rules an exception, that persons classified as professional herpetologists were not eligible for prizes. Since the rodeo was closed to professionals, and was so to speak an amateur affair, how in the world did a group of amateurs and sportsmen manage to collect that many live rattlesnakes? I put this question to



the congenial weight master and received a reply of, "Come on, let's find a cup of coffee and see if we can scout up a couple of the boys who will be able to give you more detailed information."

The cafe had an honor system for coffee customers where one drew their own coffee and payed when leaving. We filled our mugs and joined a group of men at a large community coffee table where I was introduced to Douglas Birge, a lanky individual, wearing the boots and hat of a Florida cowman. Doug was

Staying clear of the gopher hole, so as not to alarm the snake, the hunters wait for the gasoline fumes to drive the rattler out.





introduced as a hound dog man with a hankering for snake catching.

In reply to my questioning, Doug promised to do more than tell me how to catch a snake, he would show me. If I would spend the night and join in the rodeo festivities, he would take me on a snake hunt at sunrise tomorrow. Nuff said, I paid for the coffee, phoned the wife and boss, mumbled something about car trouble to confuse the issue, and advised them that they would have to wait another day before I could honor them with my presence.

After an evening of rodeo festivities which included a covey of lovely southern belles competing for the title of Queen of the Rodeo, and an exhibition of snake handling and gator wrestling by Jerry Tabor of the Ross Allen Institute, the bed felt good and day broke much too soon.

The unceasing knocking served its intended purpose, and it was with reluctance I forced myself to open the door and greet Roy and Doug. Any qualms I may have had about snake hunting was soon dispelled by the enthusiasm of these two. A quick breakfast and we headed for the hills. An hour of driving through the pines and scrub oaks of North

Florida must have brought us to a desired location. Roy called a halt by saying we had to start somewhere and this area looked as good as any.

My guides on this snake hunting safari lowered the tail gate of the wagon and began to unload an assortment of equipment — garden hose, hooks, bags, bottles, snares, and snake boxes. At this point I had ceased to ask questions as I had come to expect a stock answer of just wait and you'll see. Rather than ask the question I unlimbered the camera, slipped in a roll of film, and prepared to follow my guides into the woods. This was fine except that Roy went in one direction and Doug in the other. I flipped a coin and stayed with Roy.

We were in the woods only a short time when Doug broke the stillness with what yankee soldiers must have called a rebel yell. "Doug's got one located," Roy said, as we started over the rise toward the sound. I fully expected to see Doug with a six foot diamondback in his grasp and was surprised to discover that what he had found was a gopher hole.

To those so uninformed, a gopher to a Florida cracker boy is actually

a land tortoise. These tortoise, generally found in the sandy pine woods, will dig a burrow in the ground from ten to twenty feet long. This burrow serves not only as home for the gopher, but other small wild critters as well. There must be a gentleman's agreement between the gopher and rattlesnake as the snake will often use the gopher hole for winter hibernation quarters, then again maybe the gopher just doesn't have the nerve to evict the trespasser.

I was disappointed to find that Doug had gotten excited and raised such a fuss over a simple little ole gopher hole. Even had he seen a snake crawl into the hole, how were we to get it out. Digging was out, we had no shovel. In answer to my query, Doug began to poke one end of his garden hose into the hole, placing a finger to his lips, motioning us to remain quiet. Placing his ear to the open end of the hose, he appeared to be listening for something. As Roy explained it to me, Doug was listening for the tell-tale sound of the rattlesnake. Doug tried another trick, blowing into the hose, which will sometimes cause the  
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Commission Photos  
By Jim Floyd



The danger of the rattlesnake is all in the fangs from which the poisonous venom comes.

Those rattlesnakes caught alive during the rodeos are turned over to the Armed Forces for special survival training programs.







Fisheating Creek, where Gaskins constantly seeks interesting cypress knee shapes, embraces miles of scenic swampland. It is also wild turkey country.

For one Florida  
man, nature provided  
a happy way  
of life, plus an  
interesting and  
rewarding occupation

Tom Gaskins habitually carries a razor-sharp, full size axe afield, always ready to cut an unusual cypress knee.

# He Sees What We Miss

By EDMUND McLAURIN

**M**ILLIONS OF VISITORS to Florida have found the Sunshine State memorably scenic and unique. Many more have long called it home, by reason of birth or migration. Of the latter group, some unquestionably have loved it dearly for its natural beauty and resources, and have been true proponents of conservation.

But, notably among the many, relatively few have loved its forests,

streams and wildlife to the extent Nature has seen fit to share profitable secrets with them. One such person is Tom Gaskins, of Palmdale, originator of the cypress knee product industry, champion turkey caller and amiable Cracker philosopher.

Because he invariably sees and appreciates natural beauty we often miss, Nature has been generous and motherly to Tom Gaskins. Not only

has she given him the priceless secret of how to live happily, but has also provided him with an interesting and rewarding occupation—with the added blessing of being able to combine everyday business with pleasure. (For such, many a dyspeptic millionaire would gladly trade places!)

This Utopia is found in the combined Cypress Knee Museum and





knee-product industry which Gaskins operates adjacent to his home on U. S. Highway #27, one mile south of Palmdale, Florida. Here is housed the largest, most unusual collection of cypress knee shapes in the world.

Although the combination has made Gaskins internationally famous, and brought him financial profit, Nature seemingly took her time in sharing her secrets with the Palmdale man, after noting his interest in cypress knees.

For a long time, she only shared with him the secret of using inverted, hollowed-out cypress knees as ornamental flower stands and bird houses, for sale through gift shops and by mail. One of Gaskins' first customers was Joel Chandler Harris, author of the Uncle Remus folklore tales. He bought several cypress knee bird houses.

It was while making a bird house that Gaskins accidentally peeled the bark from a cypress knee and realized the marketable value of the cypress wood's hidden beauty. He experimentally boiled selected knee specimens for two hours, to steam-loosen the bark. When dried and bored out, the knees finished beautifully, but did not remain so; black mold quickly ruined their attractive appearance. Experiments with a duPont-developed chemical treatment solved the problem.

Early creations found ready sale in St. Petersburg and Sarasota gift shops. Silver Springs and Cypress Gardens were likewise listed among Gaskins' first wholesale shipments.

But Wanamaker's was the first big store in the world to sell cypress knee products. John Wanamaker bought a variety of Gaskins' wall ornament and flower-fountain pieces as stock for his famous department store.

Gaskins placed his cypress knee creations on display at the New York World's Fair. The enterprise was a failure; although millions saw

Practice and patience are the secrets of successful turkey calling, Tom Gaskins says . . . He should know, having been named national champion many times.



his exhibit, few evinced enough interest to buy.

However, the effort was not entirely without gain: While sitting in his hotel lobby, Gaskins saw a stuffed owl, and visualized a cypress knee as being an ideal base for taxidermy mountings! He successfully sold the idea, by mail, to taxidermists throughout the country.

For years, Gaskins had been saving unusual and exceptionally beau-

tiful cypress knee finds, but did not get the idea of establishing a museum—to perpetuate these objects long after cypress forests have fallen to modern electric saws and restless bulldozers—until 1948. He had already moved to Fisheating Creek, from Arcadia, to be closer to the best cypress knee country. . . .

In those days, Palmdale consisted of two stores and a freight station. There were no electric power lines or telephones. The few families in the area logged cypress crossties for the railroad, for livelihood. . . .

Several hundred rare cypress knee pieces comprise the present museum display, which is under glass in a modern open air building constructed around the largest living transplanted cypress tree.

The tree is a focal point of interest in its own right. Already close to a thousand years old when it was moved to its present location in 1951, the 12,000 pound tree has since grown a characteristic knee. . . . This same big cypress is the one that people said could never be moved, and which they claimed would not live even if it could be moved! Gaskins believed otherwise, and subsequently proved himself right on both counts. The tree now stands as a living monument to the Gaskins-held principle that you can never truly

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Located on U.S. Highway 27, one mile south of Palmdale, the Gaskins Museum houses the largest, most unusual collection of cypress knee shapes in the world.





Gaskins greatly enjoys whittling. He has sculptured many lifelike heads and intricate decorative pieces.

"I wonder if in every Cypress Knee, some long-dead sculptor's soul perhaps might be."  
(Don Blanding)

(continued from preceding page)  
know what can be accomplished unless you try. . . .

Another notable museum piece among the hundreds of unusual pieces on display is a gigantic cypress knee with root growth at top as well as bottom, the result of fertile soil being blown into its once bowl-shaped, growing top.

Human nature being what it is, people see things differently. Exhibited cypress knee shapes take common, recognizable forms to some; others mentally catalog them entirely differently. . . . When Gaskins noted the various reactions of tourists to some of the shapes of his museum pieces, he reported his observations to the editors of *PSYCHIATRIC QUARTERLY*. As a result, many prominent psychiatrists are now using cypress knee shapes instead of ink blots to determine the extent of a patient's imagination and his type of personality. . . .

Over the years, many unusual personalities have visited Gaskins' museum and little store. He especially remembers one woman customer who asked for the rarest, most unusual cypress knee piece on sale. When assured that it was the only

one of its kind known to be in existence, the woman expressed considerable elation.

Gaskins was deeply impressed with his customer's profound interest in her purchase. "You must love the beauty of cypress wood and appreciate the hand of Nature in this unusual creation," he complimented her.

"Oh, it isn't that!" she said. "You see, a neighbor of mine always duplicates whatever I buy; I want to outwit her for once!" . . .

Many visitors to the South Florida cypress knee museum are surprised to learn the cypress knee is not exclusively a Deep South growth, but is found in various sections of the United States. Gaskins has specimens from 23 states. . . .

Public acceptance of the Gaskins' Cypress Knee Museum as a Florida and international attraction has prompted the establishment of a number of rival enterprises. But Tom Gaskins is not worried! He knows his is the most complete and unique of cypress knee collections. He also knows that remaining cypress knee forest land areas are being destroyed by land developments to the extent that his truly



unusual shapes are getting almost impossible for rival collectors to duplicate. When a cypress tree is cut, offspring knees die!

This realization has caused him to look ahead to his own passing and provide for the perpetuation of his cypress knee product museum as a public education exhibit.

Gaskins lives close to his business. His home is just across the road from his museum, and within 100 feet of his front door is his factory building and display room.

His home, an attractive, rustic bungalow nestled amid oaks, cypress and palm trees at the edge of a cypress swamp, is unique in respect that it is covered top and sides with hand-rived cypress shingles cut from left-over stumps and discarded cuttings of early loggers. Although the use of cypress shingles for roofing and clapboarding was common among early settlers, the Gaskins home is now probably the only one of its kind in Florida.

Adjacent to the workshop and sales room is a 1700 foot, winding cat-walk extending over the backwaters of Fisheating Creek. Within



seconds, a visitor can be amid tall, moss-festooned cypress trees and growing knees. One sees the local cypress swamp almost exactly as the Indians did hundreds of years ago.

So far as Gaskins can determine from long period observations, there is no factual basis for the oft-repeated statement that cypress knees have the ability to grow phenomenally overnight to compensate for an abnormal water level that submerges their tips. Normally, according to Gaskins—cypress knees grow very slowly. It has taken years for selected specimens to grow around bottles and horseshoes he has placed in them for growth experiments.

Usually, an undisturbed cypress knee will grow around any foreign object not dislodged by wind or man, and likewise will eventually conceal its own surface wounds. The rate of growth of a cypress knee is unpredictable and also may take any form that meets the whim of Nature's sculpturing hand.

Contrary to general belief, cypress knees are not naturally hollow. Where such specimens are found in natural state, they are usually in areas that have known fire. Most of the knees which Gaskins brings in from the swamps must be bored with special tools of his own patented design.

He habitually carries a razor-sharp, full size axe afield in the same



It doesn't take much imagination to visualize the likenesses embodied in these cypress knee shapes.

way The Rifleman keeps his Winchester conveniently at hand. So skillful is Gaskins' use of an axe that he can place a small wood-stem safety match on a log and split it lengthwise with one full, overhead swing.

Gaskins collects his cypress knee product stock mostly in the winter months, when cypress knee growth is largely dormant and knees have the best appearance. Too, winter's lower water levels make it easier for him to reach remote sources of supply.

As might be expected, the Palmdale man has seen some rather dramatic episodes in the lives of creatures of the wild.

One he found the bodies of a fox and a rattlesnake lying close together. Evidently, the rattler had struck the fox, but had been mortally attacked in return.

On another occasion, Gaskins noticed one member of a flock of feeding white ibis did not take flight with others startled by his sudden appearance from a swamp thicket. The remaining ibis simply stood in one spot, occasionally beating its wings. Closer investigation showed that a large alligator-turtle was anchoring the bird by its feet! Had not Gaskins come upon the scene and played the part of a good Samaritan, the obstinate turtle would undoubtedly have weakened and drowned the bird in time.

Although Gaskins has encountered many potentially dangerous snakes during his exploration of backwater areas, only once has he ever been really frightened by a big rattler or moccasin.

In 1942, he came around a palmetto patch to face the biggest rattlesnake he has yet seen. The snake was so large that Gaskins didn't  
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Harvested knees must be boiled, peeled of bark, bored, and air dried in the sun before they can be utilized.

Usually an undisturbed knee will grow around any foreign object that is not dislodged by wind or man.





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even dare cut a club and attempt a killing. He believes it would have been a record specimen, had he been able to kill or capture it.

"That day, I knew first hand that fear can really make a person's scalp tingle and his hair stand up!," he says, when reviewing the experience.

As a turkey caller, Gaskins has been named national champion many times. Likewise, his hand-made, cedar box-and-slate turkey call has been widely imitated.

One rival even used Gaskins' published advertising "copy" and illustration, word for word, comma for comma, to advertise his own product! Users of the original product were quick to recognize the mis-use of the material, and many found it humorous. Although justifiably incensed, Gaskins nevertheless considered the outright plagiarism a tribute to his turkey call.

Besides his love for turkey hunting, Gaskins enjoys whittling. His sharp, deftly-applied pocketknife has sculptured lifelike heads of friends and fashioned many intricate mechanical and decorative pieces.

The Palmdale man recommends either turkey calling or whittling to anyone who wants to develop his ability to think through problems, concentrate and work carefully. One mistake, in either, Gaskins says, and your day's efforts are wasted!

Prior to his entry into the cypress knee product business, he had made three attempts to hew a canoe from a cypress tree. His third try was successful. Made from a solid log, it was approximately 16 feet long and seated two persons comfortably. After much hard use, the craft was eventually retired—to occupy a place in the present museum.

One finds Tom Gaskins well-read, posted on current events and strong in his convictions. A careful listener will note, however, that he sticks to logically presented facts when expressing his views and personal philosophy, rather than offering con-

clusions reached by syllogization.

You may not always agree with Gaskins' held opinions, but you have to agree that he does not attempt to force his listeners to accept his opinions. He merely states what he believes, then lets you think for yourself and reach your own conclusions.

Currently, Tom Gaskins in writing a book—a combined autobiography, history of cypress knees and their marketing and recorded Florida Cracker philosophy. So far, he has written some 76,000 words! By his own admission, the hardest part of the writing has been to bring the text to conclusion. In all probability, the lengthy draft will eventually be broken down into several separate volumes.

Although the area's population has multiplied many times, life in the Palmdale-Fisheating Creek section is still conducted at a leisurely pace, and activity is delightfully rural. Once a month—or more often, should they be in the mood—the families living in the Palmdale area get together for an old-fashioned picnic. I was fortunate to be in the area on a recent occasion.

No sooner had I bowed politely to a few of the ladies and "howdied" some of the men, than a heaped plate of fat, succulent fried mullet, frog legs, swamp cabbage and other local delicacies was thrust into my hands. Behind me, a huge iron pot, serving as a mass-production deep frying unit, kept a second and third helping of "fillins" a-coming!

If the folks present under the oaks and pines had any of man's physical ailments, they surely didn't show any symptoms! All were perfect pictures of health, the result of much outdoor-Florida living.

Appropriately, too, in the Palmdale vicinity, personal wealth is not measured by the thickness of a man's wallet, or the make of his car, but more rightly by his turkey calling ability and the excellence of his hunting dogs.

During the evening's assembly of these easy-going rural folk, one man approached the group carrying a still struggling 6-pound largemouth black bass. Before I left for home next day, I saw eight more big, freshly caught bass; the largest, duly weighed on accurate scales, weighed 11 pounds, 7 ounces!

I was told that the man who caught the 6-pound bass had probably killed more wild deer than any man in Florida. During the fever-tick plague of the late 1930's, he participated in the South Florida deer eradication program the State reluctantly had to institute, and personally hunted down and killed more than 600 deer during this critical period.

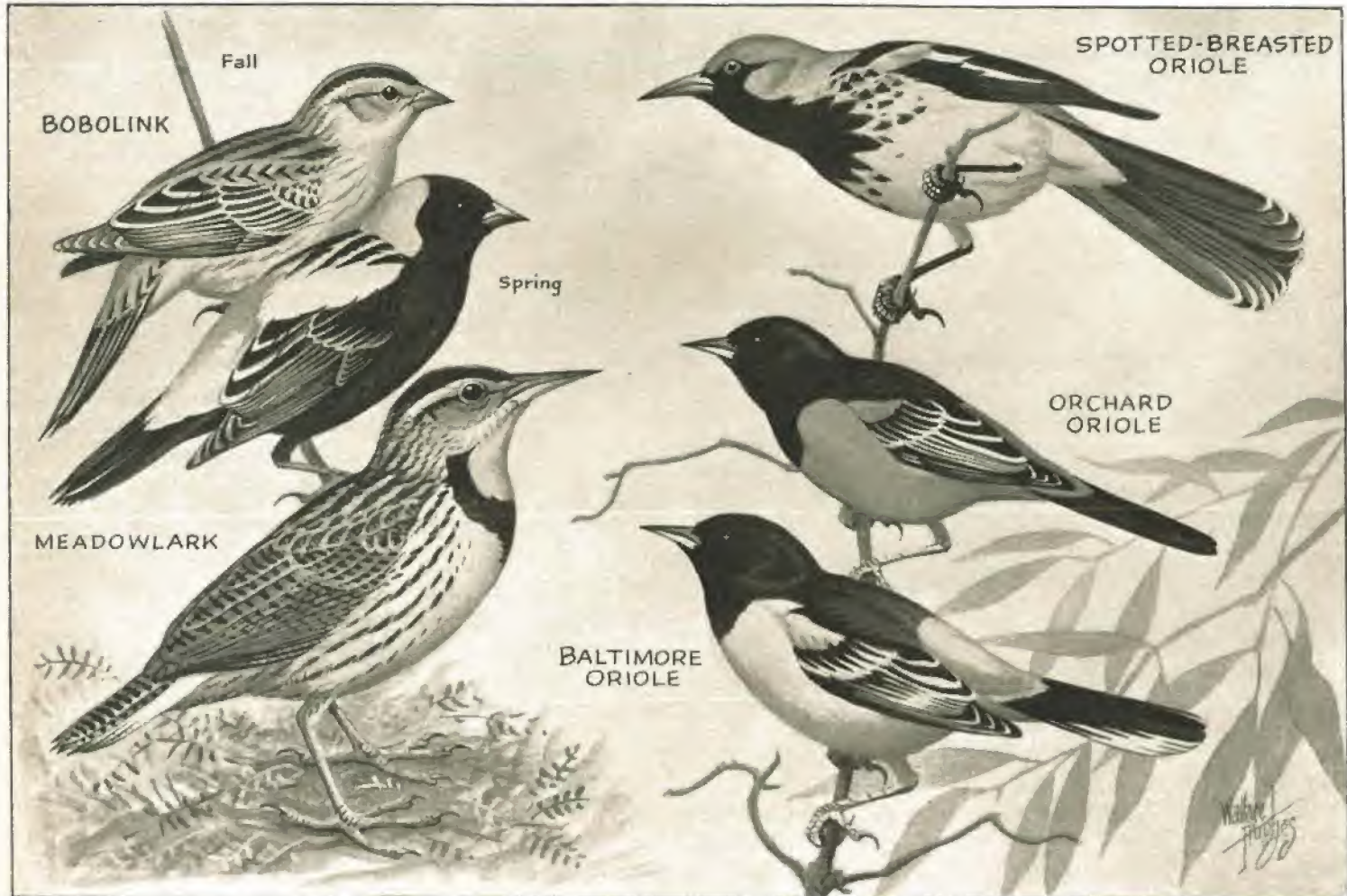
I also learned how to tell the difference between a fever-tick and a common wood tick. The first was described to me as a very slow crawler. One placed in the palm of the hand will slowly crawl to the edge of your hand and fall off, whereas the healthy wood tick will speedily crawl around your hand and up your arm, seeking a spot to settle down to business.

Unfortunately, the simple life of the Palmdale residents is fast being complicated by an unprecedented influx of trailer-living tourists and seasonal armies of eager turkey hunters. The former unthinkingly strew trash and tin cans over the landscape and deface beautiful camping spots with needless chopping and poorly located campfires. The latter invade the Fisheating Creek hunting lands in such numbers during hunting season that an expert turkey caller is just as apt to get a load of shot in his face or back of his head as an answering turkey yelp.

But whether or not Tom Gaskins will be engulfed by the sweeping tide of humanity remains to be seen. Chances are good he will some day leave his museum for all to see and seek some Shangri-la back in his beloved cypress swamps. . . . Maybe I can get him to take me with him. . . . ●



# FLORIDA BIRDLIFE



## **Bobolink, *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*.**

The bobolink is a bird of the meadow lands, pastures, and open fields. Although insects comprise something more than half of the diet, food of vegetable origin, especially grains of various sorts, are taken in quantity. Rice especially offers an attraction no bobolink seems able to pass. The inroads of an assembled host of these "ricebirds" frequently amounts to a serious drain on the year's crop.

To the celery grower the bobolink renders a valuable service. Like the Western palm warbler the species eats vast numbers of the destructive celery leaf tier.

During the breeding season the male displays a distinctive plumage pattern of black, white, and buff. The rest of the year his plumage resembles that of the female and the young, that is, predominately buff below and olive brown above.

The nesting range of the bird ex-

tends over a considerable expanse of territory encompassing southern Canada and the northern United States.

In Florida the bobolink occurs in abundance during both the northward migration of spring and again during the fall passage. South America hosts the birds during the winter months. Mid-August is the usual time at which the first of the southbound birds appear in Florida. During April and May vast numbers of them again pass through the state on the way northward.

## **Meadowlark, *Sturnella magna*.**

This robin-sized bird displays as an unmistakable trademark a bright yellow breast with a contrasting black crescent. A year round resident of the state, the lark is abundant in most sections throughout the peninsula.

Fields and grasslands are the favored habitat. The meadowlark's nest is a more or less loosely con-

structed cup composed mainly of grass stems. It is usually at least partially domed over with plant stems and grass. In Florida the nesting period extends over several months starting as early as February in the southern part of the state and extending at least into the latter part of June in Duval County.

Three to five eggs comprise the usual clutch. They are white with spottings of brown and purplish hue.

The characteristic song is of a particularly pleasing and mellow quality. The strong steady flight of a meadowlark flushed from the ground at close range is somewhat reminiscent of a bobwhite encountered under similar conditions.

Insects make up some seventy-five percent of the meadowlark's diet. Beetles, grasshoppers and crickets are among the most important of these. When insects are in short supply, various weed seeds are taken

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as well as such grains as may be locally available. The latter, normally waste scattered during harvesting operations, is of no significance to the producer.

#### **Orchard Oriole, *Icterus spurius***

Although not as flashy of plumage as some of the other orioles, the mature male of this species is nonetheless a bird of striking appearance. The black head, neck, and foreback nicely set off the reddish brown body coloration. The female is overall yellowish in hue, the underparts with a slight greenish cast and the upperparts shaded with brown. Until his second breeding season the young male resembles the female except for his black chin and throat.

In the northernmost portion of the state the orchard oriole is a fairly common resident during the summer months. The species winters from Mexico down through Central America into Columbia. During periods of migration to and from the more southerly areas, this oriole may be encountered in various localities throughout the state.

The nest of the orchard oriole is a pouch-like structure composed of grasses. It may be hung in the fork of a tree, usually at moderate heights of from 10 to 20 feet above the ground. Here in Florida a clump of Spanish moss is commonly utilized

as a nest building site. The structure itself is most often woven of green grasses and is in the form of a deep cup. The four to six eggs are white with variable spotting and blotchings of purple and brown. May and June are the months of nesting activity in the state.

Some food of vegetable origin may be taken by the species. Mulberries seem especially favored by the orchard oriole. Insects, many of them ranking as important agricultural pests, are consumed in considerable quantities by the orchard oriole.

#### **Baltimore Oriole, *Icterus galbula***

The male of this species, with his striking black and orange plumage, attracts much attention from even the most casual of bird observers. The female is much less conspicuous with the plumage of neck, head, and the upper back a dull yellow. The underparts are a brighter, clearer yellow.

The nesting range of this oriole covers a sizeable territory from Nova Scotia across much of southern Canada down through parts of Montana, Colorado and southern Texas eastward through Louisiana and northern Georgia. The hanging baglike nests are frequently suspended from the tips of the upper branches of large trees where they are most conspicuous.

In Florida the Baltimore oriole is something of a rarity. It has been

noted here on occasion during the winter months but is far from being a common wintering species. Even during the seasonal migrations between its summer range and the wintering grounds in Central America it is infrequently reported from the state.

Insects comprise the mainstay of the oriole's diet but fruits both wild and cultivated are taken as the opportunity permits.

#### **Spotted-breasted Oriole,**

*Icterus pectoralis.*

The normal range of the spotted-breasted oriole extends from the Mexican state of Oaxaca down into Central America as far as the northwestern part of Costa Rica. Until September 1948 this species had not been known from the state. At that time, in the wake of a tropical storm, a number of birds later identified as of this species, were noted in the vicinity of Miami.

In 1949 a report of an instance of successful nesting of this tropical oriole was recorded from the Miami area. It apparently has become established in this section and from all reports is making a steady increase in population.

The plumage coloration, similar in both sexes, is basically two-toned, black above and orange below. Black spottings mark the sides of the chest. ●

#### **FLYING WILDLIFE OFFICER**

(continued from page 19)

and try to escape on foot in the tall grass.

"The Commission men couldn't see this. We reported it to them by radio and advised we would fly in circles over the fleeing men until they could apprehend the driver of the violation buggy. To aid them in this last operation Jim and I climbed higher, so we could better watch and give instructions to Brown.

"The lone driver soon surrendered. Then the wildlife officers returned to where we were flying and quickly made prisoners of the other two. All three were returned to the highway,

along with their confiscated buggy, to be taken to jail.

"Brown then followed us back into the swamp with the Commission vehicle until we could lead him to the site where the fleeing men had at-



tempted to burn the pile of 'gator hides and carcasses. It was a sooty, smelly mess, well saturated with 'gator grease, but it stood up in court as sufficient evidence to bring each of the hide hunters a stiff sentence of 90 days, plus a fine of \$450 apiece."

Fortunately, only a very few of the men Cossie and the other Commission pilots encounter are of this caliber.

Cossie now puts the Cub into a glide and you find yourself touching down at a small natural clearing deep in the Big Cypress. There are other airplane tire marks here and you notice a small cabin plane parked at the far end of the runway.



Near it, in the shade beneath a stand of bushy trees, you make out a comfortable camp.

Several khaki-clad deer hunters come out to meet you with wide grins, despite the fact they've had no luck so far. It's the camp of R. W. "Griff" Griffin, a fun-loving veteran Glades hunter from Belle Glade. Griff's towering swamp buggy is parked nearby, the name "Black Widow" painted on it in bold letters. The well-known camp has been here for years.

Griffin introduces "Prof" Davidson, Hubert Swain, several others as you accept their welcome invitation to join them in some freshly-brewed coffee. It's obvious from their manner that these men have known Cossie a long time and think highly of the wildlife officer.

Airborne once more, Cossie points out an egret rookery, then a lone doe standing quietly beside a cypress trunk. In the distance you see several other camps. You are struck with the sweeping vastness of this tropic wilderness.

The pilot senses your thoughts. "A good place to get lost," he says soberly, adding: "Much of the getting lost could be avoided, however, if hunters would keep a few simple things in mind.

"First, if anyone gets lost in the Cypress, or the Glades or anywhere else, the first thing he should do is remain with his vehicle as long as possible, if he has one. Being larger than himself it will prove much easier for searching planes to spot from the air. If he strikes off on foot he'll likely just walk in circles, anyway.

"He should build a good fire. And after it is going good put green stuff on to make it smoke. Most any pilot within miles will veer off to inspect a smoke like that.

"It's always a good idea to carry along matches in a waterproof container for such use. And a small flashlight, perhaps a few flares, can prove mighty important after dark. Often we could spare a lost hunter the need for remaining out all night with the mosquitos and snakes if



Besides regular patrol flights, the Flying Wildlife officer takes part in special search and rescue missions.

he'd only thought to bring along matches or a light to signal us."

You learn that another trick used by veteran hunters is to employ toilet tissue for spelling out your needs on the ground. Weight the paper with small stones should a breeze be blowing. Once, Cossie tells you, he flew over such an urgent message that requested a replacement axle to repair a broken down swamp buggy. The pilot immediately flew to Okeechobee, where he was able to find not only the axle but a volunteer to help him drop the heavy steel shaft from the light plane. In less than an hour after the grateful hunters below received this they were on their way home."

On another occasion Cossie came upon an airboat stranded in high sawgrass during the hunting season. To his surprise, the lone operator proved to be a girl. She'd driven her speeding craft hard into the tall grass and couldn't get it out.

"She was really stuck," the handsome Commission pilot recalls with a grin. "I kept circling and she kept waving hopefully at me. She looked to be in her 20's, quite pretty."

"So—what happened?" you ask quickly, sensing romantic intrigue.

"Did you make a once-in-a-lifetime landing atop the tall grass and rescue her somehow?"

Cossie sighs. "Nope—couldn't risk a Commission plane to do that. Besides, it so happened there were a couple of our wildlife officers in an airboat about five miles away. I dropped them a note and they came over and helped her get free."

Sometimes the grim swamp doesn't give up its victims so readily. Recently Cossie Conrad managed to find an airplane that had been missing for eight days. The pilot, a student on a cross-country flight from Sarasota to Miami, had disappeared somewhere between the two points—in the Everglades, it was suspected—although no one had been able to find a trace.

Cossie had volunteered to work with the search authorities as much as his regular duties as a flying wildlife officer would permit. On the eighth day, flying alone, he spotted a piece of the crumpled plane in the heart of the Big Cypress. The plane apparently had come apart in mid-air, perhaps during a thunderstorm, and had telescoped into a cypress head.

"It was very hard to see," Cossie tells you matter-of-factly. "I just happened to be looking straight down to catch the noon sun striking one of the light blue wings."

The pilot had been alone in the 150 Cessna. He was dead. Cossie radioed for a Coast Guard helicopter to bring out the body.

The plane leaves the Big Cypress and follows a course that will take it to Glades County and Fisheating Creek. Cossie wishes to inspect the inevitable camps there. You begin to approach Lake Okeechobee and the talk turns to fishing and boating. It's also part of the Commission pilot's job to carefully scrutinize boats to determine whether they be violating the law—for instance, chasing or shooting wildfowl while underway—or may be in need of assistance.

"Here, again, sportsmen in trouble should not desert their craft and try

(continued on next page)



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to make it alone by swimming," Cossie says emphatically. "Unless the boat is sinking, of course. But even a boat that has filled with water will usually keep one afloat, spare him from drowning, until help comes. And it surely is much easier to notice from the air than is a man swimming by himself."

Gradually the day wears on. It comes time to head home. You gas up, then fly past the sugar mill at Clewiston, over miles of sunny crop fields that checkerboard the surrounding countryside.

As you follow the Miami Canal southeastward through the heart of the vast Everglades the pilot points to a spot below. "Two real big 'gators used to live down there," he says. "I guess I watched them in that same spot for 7 or 8 years. They were each at least 15 feet long. We called them 'Ma' and 'Pa'. After the canal was dredged out we never saw them again."

He goes on to tell of the sport he's often enjoyed by circling high overhead to watch wily deer outwit unsuspecting hunters in the high sawgrass. "They'll get right down on their knees—looking more like big dogs than bucks—to crawl around behind the men and escape."

The talk swings to the danger

from indiscriminate use of fire in the Glades . . . if a campfire is not properly put out it may rekindle and ignite the rich peat, so that huge muck fires may rage for days.

You wait for the veteran pilot to start talking about what must be the sour aspects of his job. He doesn't. But you find yourself wondering about it anyway . . . the number of times he's been called from the comfort of his home to search for young boys in their early 'teens, who get lost mainly because they persist in playing adult and hunting alone . . . the adults who set up camp purposely several days early to mark down turkey roost trees, then find sadistic delight in knowing exactly where to go before legal shooting time on opening day to blast the helpless birds.

You find yourself thinking of those twisted persons who would delight in running down and killing a little fawn with their airboat when the water is high . . . and you wonder if you could maintain composure under such circumstances were you obliged to wear the wildlife officer's uniform . . .

You know that during such periods of high water in the Glades a deer simply hasn't a chance to escape an airboat. The only place it can seek refuge is on one of the

higher islands. To kill one under such conditions you wouldn't even need a gun—you could club it to death—presuming you were that kind of person. Yet you know, too, that during past occasions when the Game Commission has ordered a temporary halt to deer hunting in the flooded Everglades it immediately became a target for "pressure" from many so-called "sportsmen" to rescind the order.

You realize that already an alarming percentage of such Game Commission supervised public hunting sites as the Collier and Big Cypress areas are now being leased, instead, from the owners by individuals to provide hunting sport for but a comparative few individuals . . . and that such land represents the last open country available to South Florida sportsmen.

You say none of these things to your companion. It isn't necessary, you know. Instead, you continue to sit there thoughtfully while he wings in over the heavily populated "Gold Coast" area where you both live.

He sets the plane down easily. You step out with your camera equipment to stretch your cramped body. You stick out your hand and say goodbye.

The time is 4:30. It has been a quiet day. ●

## MUZZLE FLASHES

(continued from page 11)

while, what we have is plenty good.

The change to smokeless powders has been sorrowful, and frequently disastrous, to many owners of old Damascus, or laminated iron and steel twist, double barrel guns made fifty years or more ago for black powder loads. Despite ammunition company and gun editor warnings that modern, high velocity smokeless powder shell loadings are unsafe in these old guns, many owners of these family heirlooms have been reluctant to give them up. Many persons have suffered injury in consequence.

Unless gunsmith or other competent inspection shows these old guns were made with fluid steel

barrels, don't take the chance of a blow-up by using the wrong kind of shell loading!

Although fired shotshell cases in good condition can be reloaded by a careful operator to give excellent field performance, still, handloading cannot equal the uniform wad pres-



sure and unvarying crimp seal over the shot wad that is possible with machine loading methods. For this reason, most serious trapshooters fire their reloads for practice and purchase fresh factory fodder for competitive events. . . . Slight differences in wad pressure, reduction of paper tube strength by the re-sizing operation during reloading, and the reloader's use of an over-shot wad, all affect uniform velocity. . . .

In factory packaging or home reloading, for every shotgun there is an ideal, matching shell loading and best performing shot size. The smart shooter finds the right combination and sticks with it. To him, a shotgun shell is a big bargain in a little package. ●





# WILDLIFE BALANCE WHEEL

IT'S MAY AGAIN. Once more our thoughts are directed toward summer and all of the many adventures which are ours for the planning. It's camping time whether for the family or the individual.

Camping, of course, with all of its excitement and new things reminds us that our Youth Conservation Camp will be ready again this year. It will be our ninth year for operation. You parents who haven't decided where to send your son or daughter why not investigate the Youth Conservation Camp located at Lake Eaton in the Ocala National Forest. Write to us:

**Youth Conservation Camp, 2520 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, Florida**

For you parents who are sending your son or daughter again this year you should have received an application in the mail by this time. Please mail it.

Applications are available at all Regional offices as well as Tallahassee Headquarters.

The schedule for 1960 encampment is:

## Girls Week:

July 3-9	Ages 10-12
July 10-16	Ages 10-12

## Boys Week:

July 17-23	Ages 8-12
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## Boys Two-Weeks:

July 24-30	Ages 8-12
July 31-Aug. 6	Ages 8-12

## Boys Week:

August 7-13	Ages 13-16
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## Boys Week:

August 14-20	Ages 8-12
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Fill out your application for a reservation NOW and send it to this office.

\* \* \* \*

Our director again this year will be Mr. Bernard Dykes, physical education instructor at the University of Florida.

By DENVER STE. CLAIRE

Our full staff will be announced in the June issue of Florida Wildlife Magazine.

\* \* \* \*

Girl Scouts are returning this year. This is their fourth annual camp Wildlife under the direction of Mrs. G. T. Costello of the Lake Ridge Girl Scout Council.

Dates for their encampment are; June 12-25. The week of June 5-11 will be used for pre-camp counselor training.

\* \* \* \*

August 21-27 is the week for crippled children at camp. Last year we experimented with eight of the youngsters. All had a good time. This year more of the youthful campers are to be registered for a full week of fun and new adventure.

\* \* \* \*

The ninth Annual Conference of the Youth Conservation League will be held this year at the Youth Conservation Camp June 30, July 1, 2, and 3.

Delegates from twenty-two clubs will participate in the conference. The president of each club and one

## EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK RANGER STATION



delegate for each 25 members or fraction thereof attend the conference to discuss, establish and recommend to the clubs in the state.

We look for a big turnout for this conference. About forty-four delegates should be represented to elect their officers for the 1960-61 year.

\* \* \* \*

Here's a poem dedicated to—  
A BOY

"I took a piece of plastic clay  
And idly fashioned it one day;  
And as my fingers pressed it  
still

It bent and yielded to my will.  
"I came again when days were  
past

The bit of clay was hard at  
last;

My early impress still it bore  
And I could change its form no  
more.

"You take a piece of living clay  
And gently form it day by day;  
Moulding with your power and  
art

A young boy's soft and yielding  
heart.

"You come again when years  
are gone

It is a man you look upon;  
Your early impress still he bore  
And you can change him never-  
more!"

Author unknown

## Adult Advisory Council

Our AAC is making tremendous progress these days. At its first meeting of 1960 held recently in Bartow discussion centered around appointing three study committees to investigate creating a conserva-  
(continued on next page)



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tion education program for our schools; a conservation program to be used in all camps whether religious, private, civic, public, etc. and a counselor training program in conservation to be offered by the University of Florida's extension service in cooperation with the American Camping Association.

New members who attended the meeting were; Mrs. G. T. Costello of Lake Alfred, Mrs. Evelyn Brad-dock of St. Augustine, and Bob Somers of Ocala. The meeting was presided over by Herb Mayhew, chairman, from Miami. Secretary Bob Gottron of Stuart was in attendance.

Other members present were;

Mrs. W. S. Miller of Bartow, Mrs. Helen Ross of St. Augustine, Ralph Tompkins of Land O' Lakes, Mr. B. L. Timmons of Bartow, and Jack Partusch of North Miami.

The Council regretfully accepted the resignation of Dade Thornton, Miami.

Absent for the meeting were Allen Powell of Shadygrove, Russell Mason of Maitland, Gene Gallant of Ocala and Mrs. Mary Ann Twyford of Leesburg.

The Councils membership when completed will be twenty-five.

During the meeting regional chairmen were appointed by the AAC chairman Herb Mayhew. They are as follows:

1st district — Ralph Tompkins, chairman; Mrs. Miller, co-chairman.

4th district — Bob Gottron, chair-man; Jack Partusch, co-chairman.

5th district — Helen Ross, chair-man; Russ Mason, co-chairman.

The annual meeting of the Adult Advisory Council will be held at the Youth Conservation Camp on July 1, 2, and 3. Their annual banquet will be held together with the League's annual banquet on July 2, 1960.

#### Club News

Word from W. A. "Pop" Reynolds tells us that he is now busy reactivating the Pahokee Junior Conservation Club. Newly elected officers are: Sonny McElhenny, President; Joey Thompson, vice - president; Mike Youngblood, Secretary and Reporter. ●

### FLORIDA'S STRIPED BASS

(continued from page 15)

growth rate, age, weight, food, sexual maturity and a host of other life history matters can be determined. Special effort will be put on tagging as many of the striped bass as is possible, then releasing them for possible recapture later.

Tagging striped bass is not a simple operation. If you catch a big one on hook and line, it usually fights itself to death before it is landed—so that's no good. Catch them in the usual kinds of nets and they injure themselves while trying to get free. Maybe special nets or traps will provide an answer—the problem remains to be worked out. One idea high on the list of possibilities is to anesthetize the fish with a chemically treated dart, using aqualung technique to catch them. This is not as far-fetched as it may seem, since under some circumstances the big stripers are easily approached by aqualungers. Barkuloo and Grover have already been able to make underwater studies on striper behavior using the aqualung.

It is known from experience in South Carolina and other areas that it is possible to establish reproducing populations of striped bass in lakes



Light tackle anglers hail the smaller striped bass as "fighting-fools" and a true gamefish.

and impoundments completely isolated from the sea. Can we do the same thing in Florida? Can we stock certain suitable lakes with stripers to increase the wealth of Florida sport fishing? Can dams, placed at strategic locations, increase the number of striped bass available to our sportsmen?

Along this same line, can striped bass be successfully transplanted into other Florida rivers without damaging present fishing conditions there? One of the most successful transplantations in the history of fishery management involves the

striped bass. Toward the end of the last century, a number of young stripers from the New Jersey area were shipped across country by rail and were released in the San Francisco area. Today, as a direct result of these transplantations, the striped bass is one of the most valuable sport and commercial species on the west coast.

Stocking of lakes and transplantations must await the results of life history studies. Before we can think seriously about stocking new waters with striped bass, we need to know what conditions are most favorable for them. We could spend a lot of time, effort and hard cash in a program of lake stocking or transplantation, and lose it all by not providing for the introduced striped bass with the special things it needs to live and multiply. Transplantation of striped bass to a peninsular Florida river might result in severe competition between the striper and native fish, leading to reduced fishing in a once productive river.

To get a head start on the problem of stocking striped bass, Barkuloo has placed a known number of small individuals into a lake which has been studied up and down. The fish management experts know how the lake was before the stripers were placed in it, the composition of the



fish population, the kinds of food and cover available, even the kinds and numbers of fish taken by fishermen there through the years. Now they will watch what happens (1) to the stripers and (2) to the original fish population. Under such controlled conditions, solid data about the risks and benefits of stocking striped bass may be expected.

The striped bass investigation is actually a part—though the largest part!—of a general study of all Florida fish that leave salt water to come into fresh water for spawning. Though it still remains to be proved that Florida's striped bass ever venture beyond brackish water, it technically falls into this category on the basis of how it behaves "up north." Several well known game fishes like the snook and tarpon frequent fresh water, but these do not breed in the rivers and so are not included in the study at this time. Among the most important Florida fishes that do leave salt water to enter the rivers for spawning are the sturgeon, the Alabama shad, and the American shad.

It comes as a surprise to most Florida anglers that the mighty sturgeon of caviar fame is found in the state at all; but this big fish is present in large rivers of both coasts. Sturgeons support a considerable commercial fishery in the Apalachicola area, the catch being sent to northern markets. Barkuloo will study the sturgeon as a possible game fish for Florida.

The American shad is familiar to light tackle anglers "in the know" from the St. Johns River area. This fish is present in enormous numbers during the migration upriver to spawn and on the return trip to sea. It furnishes excitement on a flyrod or spinning tackle, and good eating on the dinner table. Its counterpart on the Gulf coast is the Alabama shad. For some reason, the 'Bama shad has not caught the attention of Florida sportsmen yet. This chunky fish offers a wide-open opportunity for excitement to the light tackle angler.

The best time to try for the Ala-



Until a dozen years ago, few anglers associated Florida's "rockfish" with the striped bass of angling fame along the northeast Atlantic coast. On Pearl Harbor Day, 1949, Roy Martin, of Panama City, caught this 28-pounder while fishing from the Gorrie Bridge at Apalachicola. Roy Martin did much to publicize the fact that "rockfish" was, in reality, the top-ranking gamefish. Striped Bass.

bama shad is from about mid-January to mid-March. The FLORIDA WILDLIFE staff recently tried the mettle of this fish at the Chipola River cutoff. After 15 minutes of trolling with small spoons, the net result was zero strikes. They were about ready to write up a nasty report on the 'Bama shad, when all of a sudden the shad started taking the spoon as fast as they were put overboard. Averaging about 12-15 inches and full of fight, these scrappers changed the story in a hurry about the Alabama shad as a sports fish.

One of the big surprises already to emerge from this project is the discovery or "rediscovery" of the wide variety of fish awaiting freshwater anglers in Northwest Florida. It's ancient history that the Panhandle is one of the top spots in the nation for largemouth bass and bream. But how many readers know that you can catch baking-sized salt water flounders in the shadow of the Jim Woodruff Dam? They are there, all right. Barkuloo has taken them. Many other "typical" salt water species range far up into Panhandle rivers.

There seems to be an "invasion" of freshwater fish from other regions into the Panhandle, too. For instance, mountain mullet and the white bass have both recently been taken by the biologists. As with the

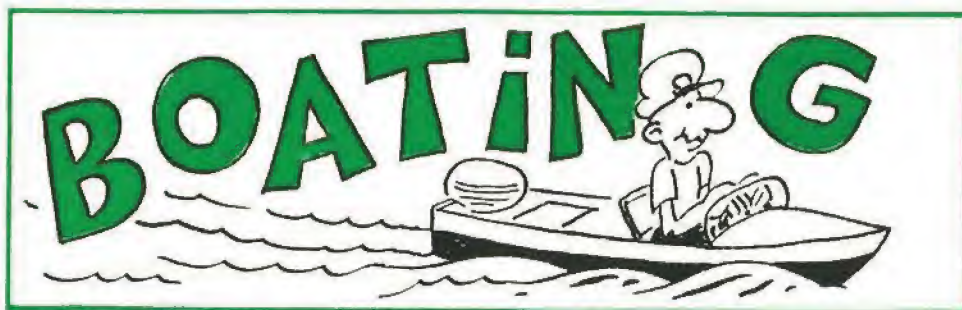
striped bass, it may be that new dams are holding some of these "Yankee" fish downriver for Floridians to catch. We don't really know the reasons. But we sure can catch them!

Appropriately, this entire project is being supported by Dingell-Johnson funds, the means by which sportsmen help finance research toward better fishing. Every time you buy a bit of fishing tackle, you pay a federal excise tax. This money goes into a special kitty, used only to give financial aid to state conservation departments for research and development in sport fish management.

Under the Dingell-Johnson (D-J) Act which provided for this fund, a state conservation agency draws up plans for a management project it wants to undertake—such as the striped bass investigation. The plans are studied, and when okayed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, funds are provided at the ratio of three D-J dollars to one dollar of state-matched money.

Thus, through this Act, Florida's fishermen help themselves toward better fishing. D-J makes possible research on our "newest" sport fishery, the striped bass. And this research will mean more fish and more thrills for Florida sportsmen. ●





**T**HEY SAY THAT rubbing ointment and liniment sales have a sharp upturn in Ocala every time a boating cruise group arrives via the Oklawaha River.

There's a reason for that statement. In the 60-odd miles between its mouth, at Welaka, and the Ocala boat basin on the tributary branch that flows from Silver Springs, the Oklawaha averages 10 tortuous turns to a mile. That's 600 hairpin twists that demand constant action by a whole slew of arm, wrist, shoulder and back muscles which ordinarily wouldn't see that much service in a month.

The Indians named the river. They were quite literal. "Oklawaha" means "crooked river."

Regardless of tortuous twists and strained muscles, the Oklawaha should be a "must"—sometime or other—in everybody's cruise book. It has breath-taking beauty and is sufficiently centrally located to be accessible in a half-day's drive with trailerborne boat from almost anywhere in the state (except the Keys and western tip of the Panhandle).

For a real thrill and an acid test of boat-driving skill, you can run it fast, pivoting in and out of the wrap-around bends at 20-mph-plus speed that'll curl the hair of your hapless guests-aboard and possibly mean the end of a beautiful friendship. Or you can cruise in a moderate manner, with time and opportunity to appreciate the attractions of the foliage and a multiplicity of bird and animal life. Most of its course is in roadless wilderness; from just above Eureka south to Lake Griffin, near Leesburg, it forms the western boundary of Ocala National Forest.

This being a wilderness stream, access points are few. Its mouth

By **DON CULLIMORE**

may be reached from Welaka, just across the St. Johns. In the central area are launching ramps and parking areas at Eureka, and at the Ocala boat basin. Upstream in the headwaters, entry is by means of Lakes Harris, Eustis and Griffin the Leesburg-Eustis area. It is possible, however, to put in on Lake Apopka, traveling by man-made channel and lockage to Lakes Beauclair and Dora into Lake Eustis and thence through the Haines Creek cut and lock into the Oklawaha.

From Welaka to Leesburg should be a two-day run, with stop-over for the night at Silver Springs, where dockage and motel facilities are available.

Having once run the stream, you become an automatic member of the unorganized and unofficial Society of Oklawaha Braggarts. It's comprised of all folk who, having negotiated the river's tricky curves, swift currents, blind chutes, recur-



Remember . . . both Coast Guard and State regulations require a life jacket or approved cushion for each person aboard, at all times.

rent snags and prop-busting semi-submerged 'gators, take fiendish delight in impressing the uninitiated with harrowing tales of the Oklawaha's horrors. Don't let their yarns deter you. It's a thoroughly worthwhile trip. Take it easy and you'll truly enjoy it.

Two years ago navigation of the Oklawaha was curtailed by low water. This year the situation is reversed—there is too much water, to the extent where Moss Bluff lock has been damaged by heavy run-off. The necessary repairs may require periodical interruption of lock service. Before starting on your trip, check on this by inquiry to the U.S. Corps of Engineers at Jacksonville, or with chambers of commerce, marine dealers or other sources in the area in a position to have up-to-date information.

With the advent of May, Ol' Man Frost has moved on up north. Clammy rains, high winds and fog have pretty generally tapered off. The warm-weather family cruising season has set in.

Here are a few precautions, vital on the Oklawaha and advisable everywhere:

1. Lash down all loose equipment securely. Particularly fuel cans, battery, anchor and those items of weight or sharp edges.

2. Check all steering cable fastenings and the like for secureness before you start. On the Oklawaha, check them again every hour or so—for the twisty turns can loosen things up. For quick and easy handling on the hairpin turns, you may want a trifle more slack in the tiller cables than normally.

3. In the Oklawaha (and the same is true of the upper St. Johns, the Kissimmee and a good many other streams) some of the blind sloughs are broader than the river channel. When the stream splits, slow up, stay with the channel where there is an apparent continuing swiftest current.

4. Take it easy on the blind curves—that snag around the bend can wreck your boat. So can another approaching craft.





Boat cruising offers an outlet for other hobbies. This lady finds an artistic appeal in a grotesquely gnarled stump along Black Creek, near Middleburg.

5. Carry a spare propeller and plenty of fuel.

6. Don't take anything for granted.

Some years ago this writer and a companion, reaching a likely looking stream, unloaded a cartop canoe, gathered fishing gear, and launched. Just around the first bend, downstream, two men were stringing a fence.

"Does this creek feed into the ——— river?" we asked.

"Sure does."

"How far downstream?"

"Couple of miles."

"How far below its mouth, on the main river is the town of ———?"

"Four miles."

A six-mile fishing float, to a town where we could prevail on acquaintances to run us back by road to pick up our car. We started off. The stream was fairly fast. We ran two tricky but not dangerous rapids. Then, abruptly, our ears picked up the unmistakable roar of a cataract up ahead; judging from the sound, one that wasn't to be taken lightly.

A cataract it truly was. Jutting rocks in staggered formation with

wildly dashing waters swirling between. Abrupt canyon-like walls on either side. The only thing that could take us past this barrier would be an airlift.

What had been a pleasantly-drifting 15-minute float downstream, became an arduous two-hour ordeal going back up. We paddled against swift current, painfully portaged the rapids. Finally we reached the bend where the men had been stringing fence. They were still there.

"Why didn't you tell us about that cataract?" I demanded, a bit huffily.

They looked at us, astounded. Finally, one said:

"But, Mister, we answered every question you asked. It's your fault, you just plumb didn't ask us whether there was a cataract up ahead!"

Well . . . he was right. We'd received courteous and accurate answers. There's a moral to this, of course: when you're getting information on new country and strange waters, get it *all*. Inquire about bridge clearances, snags, barriers, hours of lock operation, fueling stops—anything you can think of.

Central Florida Cruises, Inc., with membership in the general Orlando area, reports a "Rebel Cruise" for May 28-30. Writes Commodore E. H. Zonian, Jr.; "This is a long, winding wild cruise . . . we proceed to EEEE Fish Camp from Kissimmee and back the first day and having a fishing contest the second day. . . . on the two nights, barbecue steaks, swamp cabbage, etc . . . this one is through the wildest untouched part of Florida . . ."

\* \* \*

Writer-Navigator Ann Davison Billheimer, who won fame by a solitary Atlantic Ocean crossing by sailboat, is down in the Everglades doing a series of articles on outboard boating in that vast wilderness. Her husband, ex-Navy officer Bert Billheimer, is the photographer.

This is the terminus of Ann's 5,000-mile cruise in the eastern inland waters of the U. S. ("eastern" being interpreted as the Mississippi and those waters lying east of it.)

\* \* \*

A recent cross-section survey of outboard boatmen posed the question: "Did your wife or daughter(s) influence your selection of equipment?"

"Yes," replied 44 per cent of the husbands. Which proves that the gals are very much a part of outboarding all the way. And, to an inquiry as to what most influenced wives and daughters in their selection, the males replied: "Roominess, comfort and safety."

A close second, as an influencing factor, was "versatility for all-family use — cruising, skiing and fishing."

"Appearance, styling and color" ran in third position.

"Room, safety and comfort" outnumbered all other reasons put together. The gals know what they want. More power to 'em. ●



## FISHING

(continued from page 9)

temperamental zippers, handles that pull off, material that tears, and cardboard bottoms that fall out. The Bean bag is none of these. I have shipped my tackle bag all over this country, Canada, and the Islands by rail, plane, and parcel post; and if it can stand shipping by parcel post, it can stand anything. I've carried it in boats and canoes through fair weather and foul and have found nothing that will faze it.

This bag is 17 inches long, 7 inches wide, and 11 inches tall. It has two zipper side pockets about 7"x14". These are large enough to hold most of the much-used items. Handles are heavy leather, triple sewed to the waterproof canvas with nylon thread. Zippers are heavy-duty and can be padlocked in the closed position.

The heavy canvas of these bags goes in one unbroken piece across the bottom and is reinforced on the outside with heavy leather and five big brass studs. Altogether, this is a real he-man tackle bag that packs



This is the rugged Bean tackle bag. Note the zipper lock and side pocket.

well, holds a surprising amount of tackle, is waterproof and (so far as I can tell) wearproof as well. Color is dark brown.

As a companion to my tackle bag, I have a Bean duffel bag, listed in the Bean catalog as a Duck Hunter Bag. This has the same rugged construction throughout except it does not have side pockets and a leather reinforced bottom. This bag is 24"x9" on the bottom and 16" high. In it, I can carry all the duffel I need, even for the longest trip.

An additional advantage is this bag's ability to take my landing net

and fishing rods. These fit in the bag easily. The rods are a 7-1/2-ft., 4-pc. bamboo fly rod weighing 3 ounces and a 6-ft., 3-pc. spinning rod weighing the same. With these two bags, I can spend weeks on a fishing trip, always with ample gear ready at hand. I can't recommend them too highly for the traveling angler.

### New Boxes

Just because I personally find canvas tackle bags best for traveling and a homemade wooden box best for boat use, doesn't mean I don't admire the many fine, conventional tackle boxes now on the market. New materials in plastics, Fiberglas, aluminum alloys, and others have made tackle boxes possible today that only a few years ago were but dreams in the discriminating angler's mind.

If your needs can be properly met with one of these fine creations, then by all means stick to it. If, however, you find something lacking in boat or travel tackle boxes, then perhaps this column will point the way to greater satisfaction. ●

## DEAD OR ALIVE

(continued from page 25)

rattlesnake to wake up and start buzzing. Nothing doing at this hole, so off we go, hunting for another.

Roy discovered the second hole and called for Doug to bring the hose. This was it! Slipping the hose into the hole one could hear the angry buzzing of the rattlesnake through the hose. Well, so what! How are we going to get the varmint out! In reply Doug slipped a soft drink bottle from his hip pocket and poured an ounce of gasoline into the hose, placing the hose to his mouth, he began to blow the gas down the hose and into the hole. Roy readied his catching hook as he explained the operation. Seems the rattlesnake doesn't like the fumes from the gasoline and would very soon be crawling out. The garden hose serves both as a stethoscope and method of

getting the gasoline to the bottom of the hole quickly. At one time the local sportsmen would squeeze a lemon, fill it with gasoline, and roll it down the hole. The garden hose served the same purpose, only quicker.

We had just started on our second cigarette when the snake poked his head out of the hole. I expected Roy to pin him down but he waited until the snake had quit the hole completely before beginning the catching operation. As Roy explained it, a scared snake would go back into the hole and no amount of gasoline would induce him to leave. According to my hosts, if the snake was not free of the hole, it was almost impossible to pull him out due to the tremendous traction the snake could apply.

As the snake wiggled free of the hole, Roy readied his catching hook and shortly pinned the critter to the ground. Securing the head with a

catch stick, Roy lifted the thrashing five-footer from the ground as Doug opened the holding box. I noticed both boys kept a watchful eye on the gopher hole as many times these holes harbored more than one snake.

An hour later and with three buzzing diamondbacks in the box, we headed back to Chipley. Our snake hunt was over, but not all of my questions were answered.

What is the purpose of this Rattlesnake Rodeo? According to Roy Sanders, the rodeo is not an attempt to eradicate the rattlesnake population; however, it is hoped that the rodeo activity will serve as a control measure. Seems that since folks stopped burning the woods, the rattlesnake just doesn't have enough natural enemies, and besides it's fun and exciting to catch them.

Now that you have got them, what are you going to do with them? "The live snakes will be utilized by the



armed forces in their survival training programs," Roy said, "and the dead ones are taken to nearby state road camps. There they skin the snakes, and they eventually end up as belts, handbags, and pocket-books." Actually the snakes provide some measure of recreation and a few spare bucks for those inclined to work with them.

What real purpose does this Rodeo serve? Doug answered by saying the real objective embraced more than a single goal. The Rodeo, Doug said, provides additional outdoor recreation for sportsmen and citizens.

"A snake is like a tiger," Doug said, because both can kill you. "Capture of a diamond back is like stalking a tiger. Man is by nature a hunter. Part of the thrill of hunting the tiger is facing danger and winning. Part of the thrill of hunting snakes is safely stalking and catching dangerous reptiles."

The Rodeo has provided organization activity for the Washington County Sportsmen Club. Without some type of activity, a club soon falls into the ruts of meet, eat, and do nothing.

The Rodeo also served as an educational medium by acquainting the people with the rattlesnake and its nature, habits and requirements. An Air Force survival team was on hand during the rodeo festivities to demonstrate how the snakes could be utilized by man for food and nourishment. Through the rodeo and its activity, the sportsmen of Washington County could combat the ancient fears and explode many of the superstitions connected with rattlesnakes. "One major point to remember," Roy said as we waved farewell, "is that the Rattlesnake Rodeo is not a witch hunt, but fun, and educational."

Once more I wheeled the station wagon eastward on U.S. 90. Now the ice chest contained several choice slices of carefully cleaned rattlesnake. Not as peace offerings for the wife mate, but to await the special occasion when quail hunting cronies would gather for a period of reminiscing during the summer. ●

## FIELD TESTS AND TELLS



The name "Case" on a cutting blade is a familiar one . . . It should be! The firm that makes the famous line of pocket, hunting and general purpose knives has more than 100 years of cutlery experience associated with the marketing of its brand-name products.

Currently, the W. R. Case & Sons Cutlery Company, Bradford, Pennsylvania, manufactures more than 150 different catalog listings. Many of the blades are especially suitable for use by sportsmen . . .

For fishermen, there are several Case models worthy of reader consideration . . .

FWFT&T enthusiastically endorses the #47W-SH Sportsman's Shears, of all forged construction, heavily chromed, 8 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches overall, and intended to be carried in a belt-worn leather sheath (furnished with the product), like a belt-style sheath knife.

Fishermen will find the Case shears the handiest thing imaginable to cut bait, snip off lengths of line and leader material, to close-cut knots and do the innumerable little cutting jobs that are part of fishing. Thoughtful incorporation of a saw-toothed edge on one of the shear's cutting blades increases the tool's usefulness. Price is \$5.75, complete with leather sheath.

For the angler who prefers a pocket style knife, there is the Case #32095-F, length 5 inches closed, featuring one stainless steel general purpose cutting blade and one combination fish scaler, hook disgorging and bottle-opening blade. An unbreakable yellow handle contrasts attractively with the stainless steel parts, and also makes the unit more conspicuous to the eye and less likely to be left behind when starting home. Set in the top-handle side is a carborundum hook hone, with a center groove for quickly pointing hooks. One end of the knife has been drilled with a tiny hole, so that the user, if he desires, can easily add a belt hook ring or loop. Price is \$5.00.

For cleaning and filleting fish, there is the very useful #203 Case Boning Knife, with highly chromed 6-inch blade and comfortable handle — plus a belt-style leather sheath in which to carry the blade.

Especially for the pan-fisherman, Case makes a small, short-bladed, stainless steel, #77F-SS Panfish Knife that makes scaling and cleaning of panfish quick, easy work.

It, too, comes with a belt-style leather sheath and, like the #203 Boning Knife, is inexpensive.

Case cutlery is represented in the Florida-Georgia area by J. C. Sanders, 930 Second Street, North, St. Petersburg, who has traveled the two states for the Pennsylvania firm for more than thirty years.

No matter which of the described fisherman's blades you select, FWFT&T is confident you will derive service and satisfaction from your purchase.

\* \* \*



Every sportsman finds innumerable uses for a small axe. However, to be of any practical value it must be a quality item—strong, sharp and well balanced.

FWFT&T recommends the True Temper "Rocket" model, 13 inches overall and weighing 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  pounds, exclusive of leather carrying case.

The "Rocket's" drop-forged, heat-treated, polished steel head cannot loosen or fly off the tool's handle; it is locked to the handle permanently.

The handle is tubular, Boron-alloy steel, partially covered with a non-slip, cushion grip that softens chopping shock, thereby reducing fatigue. The handle of the True Temper "Rocket" axe won't slip even when it is wet or held by a gloved hand. . . . The tubular, alloy-steel handle is amazingly strong, but is intended for use as a serviceable axe handle — not a pry bar. Neither should the purchaser ever grind or file the shaft. . . .

The "Rocket" model axe is a precision tool, designed for sportsmen who appreciate the finest in axe balance, utility and design. It will give long and satisfactory service if properly used.


"Don'ts" include avoidance of cutting nails and striking the axe against other highly tempered tools or steels, abuses that can damage the best of cutting tools.

Although the "Rocket" comes with a slotted-back, saddle leather sheath for carrying the little axe on the belt, FWFT&T finds hand-carrying easier in dense brush country.

Look for the handy axe in hardware and sporting goods stores handling other True Temper products. Price is around \$6.



# QUESTION ? BOX



By **CHUCK SCHILLING**

Address questions on fishing and boating to Question Box, FLORIDA WILDLIFE, Tallahassee, Fla.

**Question:** I've used at least half a dozen landing nets and gaffs in the past year or so, none of which lasted very long or was satisfactory. What do you use? Are there any of these products on the market of superior quality? H. Shelton, Jacksonville, Fla.

**Answer:** We have Florida manufacturers of both gaffs and nets. Ed Hatch down in Hollywood produces stainless steel gaffs in all sizes. These are the very best. They will last a lifetime and be completely satisfactory. They are called "Pompanette." Your local tackle store can tell you more.

The landing net I use and like is a York net, made by the York Manufacturing Company, Sanford, Fla. These nets, large and small, are of aluminum tubing with strong, nonslip handles. The net ring is ingeniously fastened to the handle with a couple of metal screws, which makes the ring instantly detachable. Installing a new net is thus a job which takes but a few moments. This is the best all-around net I've found.

**Question:** I think it's shameful that Florida doesn't provide more boat ramps for fishermen. I had to wait almost two hours to get my boat in the water the last time I went fishing. If something isn't done, a lot of us are going to quit coming to Florida for this reason. C. Pressell, Miami, Fla.

**Answer:** I feel for you but think you are getting angry at the wrong people. I once went all the way to Sherbrooke, Nova Scotia, to fish for Atlantic salmon in the St. Marys River. We found the river bone dry. I, too, was disappointed but don't hate Nova Scotia.

I think a little planning and knowledge of alternate boat ramps would solve your problem. In the meantime, there is hardly a Florida community that is not busy producing more boat ramps for visitors.

**Question:** The Lord willing, I would like to do a little summer fishing in Florida this year and would appreciate your advice. I have been advised to watch out for gnats, but, as you know, a lot of people are misinformed.

Would you be kind enough to tell me what the summer insect situation is in Central Florida and particularly around the St. Johns River? Is a head net necessary? Bill Smith, Fishing Creek, Md.

**Answer:** I haven't seen a head net worn in Florida for over 20 years and, as a matter of fact, our summer bug problem is not nearly as acute as are black flies in Canada and mosquitoes in many of the northern states.

I fish fresh and salt water from one end of Florida to the other all summer long and find an occasional application of "Off," that wonderful insect repellent, all that is required. I confine my fishing to daylight hours. If you insist on fishing at night, the bug problem in Florida, as elsewhere, would be more serious.

**Question:** I am new to Florida and don't know much about fishing, but even I am not so green that I believe sand flies can be used for fish bait. Who's trying to fool who? N. Jennings, Delray Beach, Fla.

**Answer:** I've heard sand flies called many things but never fish bait. You are confusing sand flies, a small flying insect that bites like the jab of a red-hot needle, with sand fleas, a small crustacean found in the wash of the surf and famous as bait. If the sand flea could bite in like proportion to the sand fly, Florida's beaches would be deserted.

**Question:** Is there a small snap or fastener I can use with flies and popping bugs? I have trouble threading the fine nylon into the small hook-eye, which makes changing lures a chore. I know there are small magnifying glasses that can be worn on the shirt, but I'd rather use a gadget if this is practical. Frank Dunn, Moultrie, Ga.

**Answer:** I, too, am troubled with short arms, but I can't offer any easy solution to your problem. I've never seen a snap or fastener that was any easier to use than tying the jam knot, and in my opinion, any extra weight at the fly or bug is wholly undesirable.

Why not try a cheap pair of "dime store" magnifying glasses to use just for this

purpose? They will solve your problem, and if you lose or break them while fishing, you're not out much. I know this is not much of an answer, but it's the best I can do.

**Question:** I intend visiting the vicinity of Orange Lake and would like to plan a vacation down there this summer. How is the fishing? Are there camping sites available? How about accommodations? What kind of fishing tackle should I bring? A. Heimer, Richmond, Va.

**Answer:** You'll find everything your heart desires in the wonderful Orange Lake region this summer. Bring your camping outfit and your regular fishing tackle. For firsthand, specific, up-to-the-minute information, drive through Gainesville, Florida, on the way down. Stop in the Baird Hardware Company and have a talk with Sid Menge, manager of the Fishing Tackle Dept. Sid will be able to answer all your questions and offer a gold mine of other information.

**Question:** I plan to retire to Florida, hunting and fishing, in a few years. I would like to make contact with some Florida ham radio operators to exchange ideas and information. Do you know any operators who would give me a call? My call letters are W8MQS. Dave Terrill, Haskins, Ohio.

**Answer:** The only "hams" I'm acquainted with are other writers, and they think of radio only in terms of scripts. How about it, all you dot-and-dashers? Here is a potential Florida sportsman. Why not give him a buzz?

**Question:** I would like to get some authentic prints of Florida's ducks and wading birds. Can you tell me where to apply? B. E. Cook, Winter Park, Fla.

**Answer:** I would suggest you visit or write C. Russell Mason of the Florida Audubon Society, Box 835, Maitland, Fla.

**Question:** My partner and I fish together a lot, taking turns rowing and casting for bass. We have a friendly difference of opinion about points and pockets. When I have to choose, I always cast into the pockets as the best bet. He says I'm wrong. Can you settle this argument for us? C. Isben, Crescent City, Fla.

**Answer:** You pose a question that has been going on as long as bass have lurked along the shore lines. It will not be settled here or any other time. Like preferring blonds or brunettes, it's a matter of personal opinion. I know that's not much of an answer and I always try to be at least positive about any question, so here goes.

I prefer to cast to points. Many expert anglers of my knowledge do likewise. Don't ask why, because I don't know. I do know that many years of noting the results of casting choices has firmly settled this problem for me.



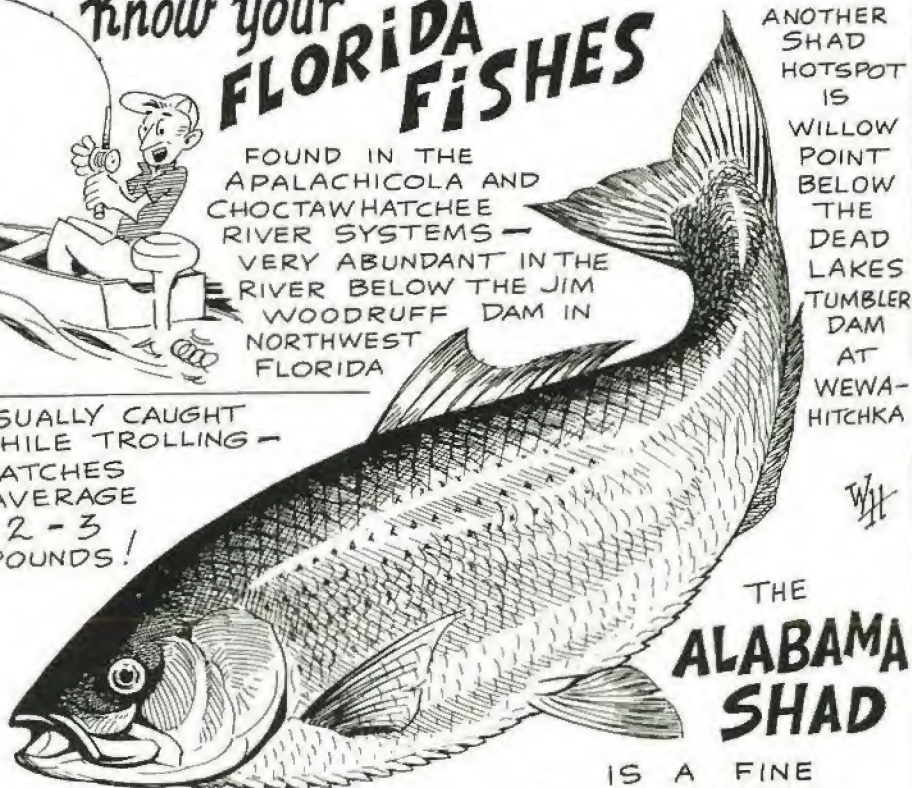
# FLORIDA

## Know your FLORIDA FISHES



FOUND IN THE APALACHICOLA AND CHOCTAWHATCHEE RIVER SYSTEMS — VERY ABUNDANT IN THE RIVER BELOW THE JIM WOODRUFF DAM IN NORTHWEST FLORIDA

USUALLY CAUGHT WHILE TROLLING — CATCHES AVERAGE 2-3 POUNDS!



ANOTHER SHAD HOTSPOT IS WILLOW POINT BELOW THE DEAD LAKES TUMBLER DAM AT WEWA-HITKA

### THE ALABAMA SHAD

IS A FINE FLAVORED FISH, BUT BONY — ITS ROE (EGGS) IS EXCELLENT FOOD

A SALT WATER SPECIES THAT MIGRATES UP FRESH WATER STREAMS IN EARLY SPRING TO LAY ITS EGGS

FLORIDA GAME AND FRESH WATER FISH COMMISSION

## Know your FLORIDA FISHES

YOU MUST HAVE A FISHING LICENSE TO FISH FOR SALT WATER FISH IN FRESH WATER

ORDINARILY CLASSIFIED AS AN ANADROMOUS SPECIES — A FISH THAT LIVES IN SALT WATER AND MIGRATES UP FRESH WATER STREAMS DURING SPAWNING SEASON TO LAY ITS EGGS — THE STRIPED BASS OF THE FLORIDA GULF COAST IS BELIEVED TO LIVE ONLY IN BRACKISH AND FRESH WATERS —

CATCHES AVERAGE 5 TO 10 POUNDS — ROD AND REEL RECORD IS

**73** POUNDS!



THE **STRIPED BASS** ALSO CALLED ROCKFISH AND ROCK BASS AND IS FOUND IN THE ST. MARYS AND ST. JOHNS RIVERS

— IS A POPULAR SPORTSFISH IN THE APALACHICOLA RIVER WATERSHED IN NORTHWEST FLORIDA

FLORIDA GAME AND FRESH WATER FISH COMMISSION

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